Illustrated Cabinet Edition

A MOSCOW ACQUAINTANCE
THE SNOW-STORM
DOMESTIC HAPPINESS
MISCELLANIES

By

Count Lev N. Tolstóy

Translated from the Original Russian and edited by

Leo Wiener

Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages at Harvard University

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
MEETING A MOSCOW ACQUAINTANCE AT THE FRONT	1
THE SNOW-STORM	35
MEMOIRS OF A MARKER	79
TWO HUSSARS	103
ALBERT	189
FROM THE MEMOIRS OF PRINCE D. NEKHLYÚDOV	229
THREE DEATHS	261
DOMESTIC HAPPINESS	281
POLIKÚSHKA	389

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

AT THE FRONT ROAD THROUGH THE FOREST — *Frontispiece*
Photogravure from Painting by Edouard Detaille.

THE SNOW-STORM 65
From Painting by Gruzinski.

A DON COSSACK 110
Photogravure from Painting by Edouard Detaille.

MEETING A MOSCOW ACQUAINTANCE AT THE FRONT

From Prince Nekhlyúdov's Memoirs of the Caucasus

1856

MEETING A MOSCOW ACQUAINTANCE AT THE FRONT

From Prince Nekhlyúdov's Memoirs of the Caucasus

We were stationed at the front. We were having our last engagements; the road through the forest was nearly finished, and we awaited from day to day the order from the staff to retreat to the fortress. Our division of battery guns stood on the side of a mountain range which ended in the swift torrent Méchik, and was to keep up a fire on the plain stretching out before us. On this picturesque plain, beyond the range of our guns, here and there occasionally appeared, especially toward evening, harmless groups of mountaineers on horseback, curious to look at the Russian encampment.

It was a clear, quiet, and fresh evening, like nearly all the December evenings in the Caucasus. The sun was setting behind the steep spur of the mountains on the left, and cast its rose-coloured beams on the tents which were scattered on the mountain, on the moving groups of the soldiers, and on our two guns which stood heavily and immovably, as though stretching out their necks, within two steps of us on an earth battery.

The picket of cavalry, stationed on a mound toward the left, was clearly outlined against the transparent light of the sunset, with its stacked arms, with the figure of the sentry, the group of soldiers, and the smoke of the camp-fire. On the right and left, half-way up the mountain, on the black, well-trodden earth, gleamed the white tents, and beyond the tents were the black, bare trunks of the plane-forest, where constantly resounded the axes, crackled the fires, and with a crash fell the trees that were cut down. On all sides a bluish smoke rose in columns toward the dark blue, frosty sky. Past the tents and in the meadows along the brook were heard the tramping and snorting of the horses which the Cossacks, dragoons, and artillerists had taken to water. Crowds of the enemy, no longer exciting the curiosity of the soldiers, leisurely moved through the bright yellow maize-fields, and here and there, back of the trees, could be seen the high posts of the cemeteries and the smoking native villages.

Our tent stood not far from the ordnance, on a high and dry place, from which was had an unusually broad view. Near the tent, and close to the battery, we had a place cleaned up for the game of skittles. The obliging soldiers had also made for us wicker benches and a small table. On account of all these conveniences, our comrades, the artillery officers, and a few of the infantry, were fond of gathering in the evening near our battery, calling it the club.

It was a glorious evening. The best players were present, and we played skittles. Ensign D——, Lieutenant O——, and I had lost two games in succession, and, to the universal delight and laughter of the spectators, — officers, soldiers, and orderlies, — who were looking at us from their tents, twice carried on our backs the winning party from one end to the other. Most amusing was the position of immense and fat Staff-Cap-

tain Sh——, who, puffing and smiling good-naturedly, with his feet dragging on the ground, rode on the back of short and sickly Lieutenant O——.

It grew late, and the orderlies brought us three glasses of tea for the six men present, and we, having finished the game, went up to the wicker benches. Near them stood a strange man of low stature, with crooked legs, wearing an uncovered fur coat and a lambskin cap with long, white, straight fur.

The moment we came up close to him he several times took off and put on again his cap, and seemed to make several attempts at approaching us, and then stopped again. Having apparently decided that he could not remain unnoticed much longer, this stranger doffed his cap and, making a circle around us, walked over to Staff-Captain Sh——.

"Ah, Guskantini! Well, my friend?" Sh—— said to him, still smiling good-naturedly under the influence of the ride.

Guskantini, as Sh—— had called him, at once put on his cap and acted as though he put his hands in the pockets of his short fur coat; but on the side which was nearest to me there was no pocket in his coat, and his small red hand was left in an awkward position.

I wanted to determine who this man was, whether a yunker or a reduced officer, and, without noticing that my look, being that of a stranger to him, disconcerted him, gazed fixedly at his dress and his exterior. He seemed to be about thirty years old. His small, gray, round eyes peeped sleepily and, at the same time, restlessly from underneath the dirty white fur of his cap, which hung down over his face. His thick, irregular nose, between sunken cheeks, accentuated a sickly, unnatural leanness. His lips, hardly covered by a soft, scanty, whitish moustache, were in a constantly restless condition, as though trying to assume now this, now that, expression. But all

these expressions were peculiarly unfinished: upon his face there constantly remained one prevailing expression of affright and haste. His lean, venous neck was wrapped in a green woollen scarf, which was concealed under his fur coat. His fur coat was worn, short, with a dogskin collar and false pockets. His trousers were checkered and of an ash-gray hue, and his boots had short, unblacked soldier boot-legs.

"Please do not trouble yourself," I said to him, when, looking timidly at me, he again doffed his cap.

He bowed to me with an expression of gratitude, put on his cap, and, fetching from his pocket a dirty chintz pouch with a cord, began to roll a cigarette for himself.

I had but lately been a yunker, an old yunker, incapable of still being good-naturedly obliging to my younger comrades, and a yunker without means; therefore, knowing well the whole moral burden of this situation for a grown-up and egotistical man, I sympathized with all the men who were in this situation, and tried to explain to myself the character, degree, and direction of their mental capacity, in order to judge from those considerations the degree of their moral suffering. This yunker, or reduced officer, by his restless look and by the intentional and constant change of expression, which I had noticed in him, appeared to me to be a very clever and extremely egotistical, and, therefore, a very pitiable, man.

Staff-Captain Sh—— proposed to us to play another game of skittles, the penalty for the losing party to be, in addition to the ride on the back, several bottles of red wine, rum, sugar, cinnamon, and cloves for mulled wine, which during this winter, on account of the frost, was very popular in our detachment. Guskantini, as Sh—— again called him, was also invited to take part in the game; but, before beginning to play, he, obviously struggling between the pleasure which this invitation afforded him

and a certain terror, took Staff-Captain Sh—— aside and began to say something to him in a whisper. The good-natured staff-captain struck him in the abdomen with the large, puffy palm of his hand and cried out in a loud voice: "Never mind, my friend, I will trust you."

The game was ended and won by the party to which the low-ranked stranger belonged; when it was his turn to ride on the back of one of our officers, Ensign D——, the ensign blushed, walked over to the benches, and offered the low-ranked man cigarettes as a ransom. We ordered the mulled wine; while in the orderlies' tent could be heard the busy preparations of Nikíta and his orders that a messenger fetch cinnamon and clove, and while his back stretched in places the dirty flaps of the tent, we seven men seated ourselves near the benches and, alternately drinking tea from the three glasses and looking before us at the plain which was being merged in darkness, conversed and laughed about the various circumstances of the game.

The stranger in the short fur coat did not take part in the conversation, stubbornly refused the tea which I offered him several times, and, squatting in Tartar fashion on the ground, kept rolling cigarettes of crushed tobacco and smoking them, obviously not so much for his pleasure as in order to give himself the aspect of a man having some occupation. When somebody mentioned that we expected to retreat on the following day, and that, very likely, there would be some engagements, he raised himself on his knees and, turning directly to Staff-Captain Sh——, remarked that he had just come from the adjutant's house, and that he himself had written out the order for the start on the following day.

We were all silent while he spoke, and, in spite of his apparent timidity, he was asked to repeat this extremely interesting piece of news. He repeated what he had said, adding, however, that he had been sitting at the

adjutant's, with whom he lived, when the order was brought.

"You are sure you are not fibbing, my friend! If not, I must go to my company and give a few orders for to-morrow," said Staff-Captain Sh——.

"No — why should I? How could I — I certainly —" muttered the low-ranked stranger, suddenly growing silent. He evidently decided to feel offended, wrinkled his brow in an unnatural manner, and, mumbling something, again began to roll cigarettes. The crushed tobacco which he poured out of the chintz pouch did not suffice, and so he asked Sh—— to loan him a little cigarette.

We for a long time continued the same monotonous military prattle, which everybody who has been on expeditions knows; we used the same expressions in complaining about the dulness and duration of the expedition; in precisely the same manner reflected on the authorities; in just the same way, as often before, praised one companion and pitied another; wondered how much this one had won or that one lost, and so on.

"Well, my friends, our adjutant is having an awful streak of luck," said Staff-Captain Sh——. "He has been winning all the time at the staff. No matter with whom he used to sit down, he always cleaned them out, but he has been losing these two months. Our present detachment is not doing him any good. I think he must have let slip some two thousand roubles, and he is minus five hundred roubles' worth of things: the rug which he had won of Múkhin, the Nikítin pistols, and Sáda's gold watch which Vorontsóv had made him a present of."

"Serves him right," said Lieutenant O——, "for he has been doing us so badly that it became impossible to play with him."

"He has been doing everybody, but now he has gone up the flue himself," said the staff-captain, with a good-

natured laugh. "Gúskov lives with him, and the adjutant has almost gambled him away, too. Is it not so, Gúskov?" He turned to Gúskov.

Gúskov laughed. It was a pitiable, sickly smile, which entirely changed the expression of his face. This change of expression made me think that I had met the man before; besides, his name, Gúskov, seemed familiar to me; but I was absolutely unable to recall when and where I had met him.

"Yes," said Gúskov, raising his hands to his moustache and dropping them again, without having touched it, "Pável Dmítrievich has had no luck during this expedition, — a kind of a *veine de malheur*," he added, with a laboured but pure French pronunciation, whereat I again thought that I had met him somewhere, and had met him often. "I know Pável Dmítrievich well, and he confides everything to me," he continued. "We are old acquaintances, that is, he likes me," he added, apparently becoming frightened at his too bold assertion that he was an old acquaintance of the adjutant's. "Pável Dmítrievich plays excellently; but what has happened to him is truly remarkable; he is almost ruined, — *la chance a tourné*," he added, turning more particularly to me.

At first we were listening to Gúskov with condescending attention, but the moment he used that French phrase we all involuntarily turned away from him.

"I have played with him a hundred times, and you will admit that it is strange," said Lieutenant O——, with a peculiar accent upon this word, "remarkably strange, I have never won as much as a dime from him. Why is it I can win from others?"

"Pável Dmítrievich plays excellently, — I have known him for a long time," I said. I had really known the adjutant for several years, had seen him frequently playing what, according to the means of the officers, might be

called a big game, and had admired his handsome, slightly melancholy, and always imperturbed and calm countenance, his hesitating Little-Russian pronunciation, his beautiful things and horses, his leisurely Little-Russian dash, and, especially, his ability to lead a game in a reserved, precise, and agreeable manner. I must confess that more than once, as I looked at his full white hands, with a diamond ring on one forefinger, beating my cards one after another, I was furious at this ring, at the white hands, at the whole person of the adjutant, and evil thoughts in regard to him came to me; but, upon reflecting later more calmly, I convinced myself that he was simply more clever at cards than any of those men with whom he happened to play. This became the more apparent when I listened to his general reflections on the game, how one must not back out, having raised the small stakes, how one must pass under certain conditions, how it was the first rule to play for cash, and so forth: in short, it was clear that he was always winning because he was more intelligent and calm than any of us. Now it turned out that this calm and collected gambler had been cleaned out at the front, not only of his money, but even of his things, which for an officer means the last stage of losing.

"He always has devilish luck with me," continued Lieutenant O——. "I have sworn I would never play with him again."

"What a queer chap you are, my friend!" said Sh——, winking at me with a motion of his whole head and addressing O——. "You must have lost about three hundred roubles to him, I know you have!"

"More," angrily said the lieutenant.

"And it is only now that you see through it! Rather late, my friend. Everybody knows that he is our regimental cheat," said Sh——, with difficulty repressing his laugh and well satisfied with his remark. "We have here Gúskov with us: it is he who fixes the cards for him.

That's why they are such great friends, my dear — " and the staff-captain burst out into such a good-natured laugh, shaking with his whole body, that he spilled a glass of mulled wine, which he was holding in his hand. On Gúskov's yellow, lean face there appeared something resembling colour; he opened his mouth several times, raised his hands to his moustache, and again dropped them down to the place where the pockets ought to have been, got up, and sat down again, and finally said to Sh——, in a changed voice:

" This is not a joke, Nikoláy Ivánovich. You say such things, and that, too, in presence of people who do not know me, and who see me in an uncovered fur coat — because — " His voice gave way, and again his small, red hands with dirty nails wandered from his coat to his face, now smoothing his moustache, his hair, his nose, now rubbing his eyes, or scratching his cheek without cause.

" What is the use? Everybody knows it, my friend," continued Sh——, sincerely satisfied with his jest and not noticing Gúskov's agitation at all. Gúskov muttered something else, and, leaning in a most unnatural manner the elbow of his right arm on the knee of his left leg, he looked at Sh——, and tried to appear as though smiling contemptuously.

" Really," I concluded, as I noticed that smile, " I have not only seen him somewhere, but I have also spoken with him."

" We have met somewhere," I said to him, when, under the influence of a general silence, Sh——'s laughter began to subside. Gúskov's changeable countenance suddenly brightened, and his eyes for the first time fell upon me with a genuinely happy expression.

" Certainly. I recognized you at once," he said in French. " In 1848, I had several times the pleasure of seeing you at the house of my sister, Madame Iváshin."

I excused myself for not having recognized him at once

in this new and strange costume. He got up, walked over to me, with his moist hand timidly and feebly pressed mine, and sat down by my side. Instead of looking at me, whom he seemed to be glad to see, he cast a glance of disagreeable boasting at the officers. Either because I had recognized in him a man whom several years before I had seen in evening dress in a drawing-room, or because at this recognition he had suddenly risen in his own opinion, his face and even movements seemed to me to have completely changed: they now expressed a wide-awake mind, a childish self-satisfaction from the consciousness of possessing such a mind, and a certain contemptuous carelessness. I must confess that, in spite of the pitiable condition he was in, my old acquaintance no longer inspired me with compassion for him, but with a somewhat hostile feeling.

I vividly recalled our first meeting. In the year '48, I, during my stay at Moscow, used to call frequently at the house of Iváshin, with whom I had grown up and remained in friendly relations. His wife was a pleasant hostess, what is called a charming woman, but I had no liking for her — During the winter when I knew her she frequently spoke, with ill-disguised pride, of her brother, who had lately graduated from the university, and who, in her opinion, was one of the most cultivated and popular young men in the best St. Petersburg society. Knowing by reputation the father of the Gúskovs, who was very rich and occupied a prominent position, and being acquainted with his sister's mental attitude, I met young Gúskov with an unfavourable bias. Having once arrived at Iváshin's house, I there found a small, very pleasant young man, in an evening dress, with white waistcoat and tie, with whom the host forgot to make me acquainted. The young man, obviously on the point of going to a ball, was standing with his hat in his hand before Iváshin, and warmly but politely arguing with him

about a common acquaintance of ours, who at that time had distinguished himself in the Hungarian campaign.

I remembered his saying that that acquaintance of ours was not at all a hero and a man born for war, as he was called, but only a cultured and clever man. I remembered having taken part in the discussion against Gúskov, and of having been carried away to extremes, proving even that intelligence and culture were always in inverse relation to bravery; I remembered Gúskov having proved to me in a pleasant and clever manner that bravery was the necessary result of cleverness and of a certain degree of development, with which I, considering myself a clever and cultivated gentleman, could not help agreeing secretly. I remembered that at the end of our dispute Madame Iváshin introduced her brother to me, and he, smiling condescendingly, gave me his small hand, upon which he had not yet entirely drawn his kid glove, and softly and timidly, even as now, pressed my hand.

Although I was biassed against him, I could not help doing Gúskov justice, and agreeing with his sister that he really was a clever and agreeable young man, who ought to have success in society. He was extremely neat and elegantly dressed; his manner was self-confident, and yet modest; he looked exceedingly youthful, almost childish, so that one felt like forgiving him his expression of self-satisfaction and his desire to temper before you the degree of his superiority, with which his intelligent face, and especially his smile, seemed always to impress you.

There was a rumour that during that winter he had great success with the Moscow ladies. Seeing him at his sister's, I could judge only by the expression of happiness and contentment, which his youthful exterior bore all the time, and by his, at times, immodest stories, to what extent this was true. We met about six times and spoke a great deal together, or, to be more exact, he spoke and I listened. He generally expressed himself in French,

which he spoke correctly and ornately, and he knew how to interrupt others in a soft and polite manner. He usually treated others, and me too, with condescension, and I, as is always the case with me in regard to people who are firmly convinced that I must be treated with condescension and whom I do not know well, — I felt that he was quite right in this respect.

Now, as he seated himself near me and gave me his hand, I vividly recalled his former haughty expression, and it seemed to me that he did not quite fairly take advantage of his low-rank position when he carelessly asked me what I had been doing heretofore and how I got here. Notwithstanding the fact that I always answered him in Russian, he kept speaking French, although he no longer expressed himself as freely in this language as formerly. In passing, he told me of himself, that after his unfortunate, stupid affair (what this affair consisted in I did not know, and he did not tell me), he had passed three months in confinement, after which he was sent to the Caucasus to the N—— regiment, where he had now been a common soldier for three years.

"You will not believe me," he said to me in French, "how much I had to suffer in these regiments from the society of the officers! It was a piece of good luck for me to have been acquainted before with the adjutant, of whom we have just been speaking: he is a good man, really he is," he remarked, condescendingly. "I am living with him, and that is some little relief to me. *Oui, mon cher, les jours se suivent, mais ne se ressemblent pas,*" he added. He suddenly hesitated, blushed, and arose from his place, when he noticed that the very adjutant of whom we had been speaking was coming in our direction.

"What a joy to meet such a man as you are!" Gúskov said to me in a whisper, going away. "I should like to have a long, long talk with you."

I told him that I should be glad to see him, but, in

reality, I must confess, Gúskov inspired me with an oppressive, by no means sympathetic, compassion for him.

I foresaw that without witnesses I should feel awkward with him. But I was anxious to find out many things, especially why, since his father was so rich, he was poor, as could be seen from his attire and his manner.

The adjutant exchanged greetings with all of us, excepting Gúskov, and sat down at my side, where the reduced soldier had been sitting. Pável Dmítrievich, who, as a gamester and as a man of business, had always been characterized by calmness and cautiousness, now seemed to be an entirely different man from what I knew him to be during the flourishing days of his playing: he seemed to be in haste to get away somewhere, continually eyed everybody, and, before five minutes had passed, he, who otherwise generally declined to play, now proposed to Lieutenant O—— to start a game at cards. Lieutenant O—— declined under the pretext of military duties, but in reality because he knew how few things and how little money Pável Dmítrievich had left, and because he considered it ill advised to risk his three hundred roubles against one hundred, or even less, which he could at best win.

"Well, Pável Dmítrievich," said the lieutenant, apparently wishing to avoid a repetition of the invitation, "is it true what they say, that we are to march back to-morrow?"

"I do not know," remarked Pável Dmítrievich, "but there is an order to get ready. Really, we had better play a game! I will stake my Kabardá charger."

"No, not to-day —"

"I'll let the gray one go, or, if you prefer, we may play for money. Well?"

"I should not mind, really," said Lieutenant O——, replying to his own doubt; "but there may be an incur-

sion or movement to-morrow, and I must have my sleep to-night."

The adjutant arose and, putting his hands in his pockets, began to walk up and down the open space. His countenance assumed its habitual expression of coldness and of a certain pride, which I liked so much in him.

"Don't you want a glass of mulled wine?" I said to him.

"I'll take one," he said, moving up toward me; but Gúskov hurriedly took the glass out of my hand and carried it up to the adjutant, trying not to look at him. But, not seeing the rope which stretched the tent, Gúskov was tripped up by it, so that he fell down on his hands, dropping the glass.

"How awkward!" said the adjutant, who had already stretched out his hand to receive the glass. Everybody laughed loud, not excepting Gúskov, who was rubbing his lean knee with his hand, although he could not possibly have hurt it in the fall.

"That is the way the bear has served the hermit," continued the adjutant. "That is the way he has been serving me every day: he has pulled all the stakes out of the tents, — he is getting tripped up all the time."

Gúskov, without listening to him, excused himself to us and glanced at me with a barely perceptible sad smile, by which he seemed to say that I was the only one who could understand him. He was pitiable, but the adjutant, his patron, appeared for some reason to be angry with his cohabitant and did not give him any rest.

"What an agile lad!"

"Who could help being tripped up by these stakes, Pável Dmítrievich?" said Gúskov. "You, yourself, stumbled the other day."

"I, sir, am not a low-rank man. No agility is expected of me."

"He may drag his legs along," interposed Staff-Captain Sh——, "but a low-rank man must jump — "

"Strange jests," said Gúskov, almost in a whisper and lowering his eyes. The adjutant was evidently not indifferent to his tent-mate, for he eagerly listened to every word of his.

"We shall have to send him again to the ambush," he said, turning to Sh—— and winking as he looked in the direction of the reduced soldier.

"There will be tears again," said Sh——, laughing.

Gúskov was no longer looking at me, but pretended to be taking tobacco out of the pouch in which there had not been anything for quite awhile.

"Get ready to go to the ambush, my friend," Sh—— said, amidst laughter. "The spies have reported that there will be an attack upon the camp at night, so we shall have to appoint reliable lads."

Gúskov smiled with indecision, as though getting ready to say something, and several times raised an imploring glance to Sh——.

"Well, I have been there before, and will go again, if I am sent," he lisped.

"You will be."

"And I will go. What of it?"

"If you don't run away from the ambush, as upon Argún, and throw away your gun," said the adjutant. Turning away from him, he began to tell us what the orders for the next day were.

For the night an attack was actually expected from the enemy, and on the morrow there was to be some movement. Having chatted about various general subjects, the adjutant, as though by accident, proposed to Lieutenant O—— to have a small deal. Lieutenant O—— quite unexpectedly consented, and they went, together with Sh—— and the ensign, to the tent of the adjutant, who there had a green folding table and cards. The captain,

the commander of our division, went to his tent to sleep, the other gentlemen also departed, and I was left alone with Gúskov. I was not mistaken: I really felt ill at ease when there was no one present with us. I involuntarily got up and began to walk up and down along the battery. Gúskov walked silently at my side, turning hastily and restlessly around, so as not to fall behind or get ahead of me.

"I do not bother you?" he asked, in a meek and melancholy voice. So far as I could make out his face in the dark, it seemed to me to be lost in thought and sad.

"Not in the least," I answered; but as he did not begin to talk, and I did not know what to tell him, we continued walking in silence for quite awhile.

The twilight had entirely given way to the darkness of the night; the bright evening star stood out above the black profile of the mountains; small stars glittered above our heads, on the light blue frosty sky; on all sides could be seen the red flames of the smoking camp-fires in the dark; nearer to us could be made out the gray contours of the tents and the murky rampart of our battery. Lighted up by the nearest fire, at which our orderlies were warming themselves, conversing in soft voices, the brass of our heavy ordnance gleamed on the battery, and the figure of the sentry, with his coat thrown over his shoulders, appeared moving evenly up and down the rampart.

"You can't imagine what a joy it is for me to speak with such a man as you are," Gúskov remarked, although he had not yet said a thing to me. "Only he who has been in my situtation can understand that."

I did not know what reply to make to him, and we again were silent, although he apparently was anxious to unburden his heart, and I wished to hear him talk.

"Why were you — why did you suffer?" I asked him

at last, not being able to discover anything better with which to start the conversation.

"Have you not heard of that unfortunate affair with Meténin?"

"Yes, a duel, I think. I barely heard of it," I answered. "You know I have been so long in the Caucasus."

"No, not the duel, but that stupid affair! I will tell you the whole thing, if you do not know it. It happened the same year that we met at my sister's, when I was living at St. Petersburg. I must tell you that I then had what is called *une position dans le monde*, and it was an advantageous, if not a brilliant, one. *Mon père me donnait 10,000 par an.* In the year '49 I was promised a place with the embassy at Turin, for my uncle on my mother's side was always able and ready to do all he could for me. It is now a thing of the past. *J'étais reçu dans la meilleure société de Pétersbourg; je pouvais prétendre* to one of the best matches. I had studied as we all study at school, so that I had no special education; it is true, I read a great deal later, *mais j'avais surtout*, you know, *ce jargon du monde*, and, however it may be, I was for some reason counted among one of the first young men of St. Petersburg. What raised me more than anything in the opinion of society, *c'est cette liaison avec Madame D——*, which was the cause of much talk in St. Petersburg, but I was dreadfully young at the time and did not value all these advantages. I was simply young and foolish. What more did I need? During that time this Meténin had a reputation in St. Petersburg—" Gúskov continued in this strain to tell me the history of his misfortune, which, being entirely uninteresting, I shall omit here.

"Two months I was locked up," he continued, "in solitary confinement, and I thought a great deal during that time. But, do you know, when everything was ended, as though the connection with the past were definitely

broken, I began to feel easier. *Mon père vous en avez entendu parler* no doubt, he is a man with an iron character and firm convictions, *il m'a déshérité* and has severed all relations with me. According to his convictions, that was what he had to do, and I do not blame him in the least: *il a été conséquent.* But, again, I did not take a step which would lead him to change his determination. My sister was abroad. Madame D—— was the only one to write to me, when I was permitted to receive letters, and she offered me her services, but I declined them, so that I was left without those trifles which, you know, make things easier for one in such a situation: I had no books, no linen, no food, nothing! I thought over so much during that time, and came to look at everything with different eyes: thus, that noise and those talks about me in St. Petersburg did not interest me, nor flatter me in the least, — it all seemed so ridiculous to me. I felt that I myself was to blame, that I had been careless and young; that I had spoiled my career, and I thought only of how to mend it again. I felt that I had the strength and energy to do that. As I told you, from my confinement I was sent directly to the Caucasus, to the N—— regiment.

"I thought," he continued, becoming ever more animated, "that here, in the Caucasus, *la vie de camp,* the simple and honest people with whom I should be in touch, war, perils, — that all that would be exactly in keeping with my mood, and that I should begin a new life. *On me verra au feu,* — they will take a liking to me, and will respect me not merely for my name, — a cross, under-officer, penalty removed, and I shall again return *et, vous savez, avec ce prestige du malheur! Ho, quel désenchantement!* You can't imagine how disappointed I am! — Do you know the society of officers of our regiment?" He was silent for quite awhile, waiting for me, as I thought, to say that I knew how bad that society

was, but I gave him no reply. It annoyed me to think that, no doubt, because I knew French, he supposed that I ought to be up in arms against the society of the officers, whereas I, having passed a long time in the Caucasus, had come to recognize its worth, and to esteem it a thousand times more than the society from which Gúskov came. I wanted to tell him so, but his position held me back.

"In the N—— regiment the society of officers is a thousand times worse than here," he continued. "*J'espère que c'est beaucoup dire*, that is, you can't imagine what it is! Let alone the yunkers and soldiers, it is simply dreadful! It is true, at first I was well received; but later, when they saw that I could not help despising them, you know, in those imperceptible, petty relations, when they saw that I was an entirely different man, who stood incomparably higher than they, they became enraged at me, and began to repay me with petty humiliations. *Ce que j'ai eu à souffrir, vous ne vous faites pas une idée.* Then those involuntary relations with the yunkers, and chiefly, *avec les petits moyens que j'avais, je manquais de tout*, — I had only what my sister sent me. The proof of what I have suffered is that I, with my character, *avec ma fierté, j'ai écris à mon père*, I implored him to send me anything he felt like sending.

"I can easily see how living five years of such a life one may become like our reduced soldier Drómov, who drinks with the soldiers and keeps writing notes to all the officers, asking a loan of three roubles, and signing himself *tout à vous* Drómov. It was necessary to have my character in order not to sink in this terrible situation."

He for a long time walked in silence at my side.

"*Avez-vous un papiros?*" he said to me. "Yes, where did I stop? Yes. I could not stand it, — I do not mean physically, because, though I suffered cold and hunger, I lived like a soldier, and the officers showed a certain

respect for me. I still had a certain *prestige* in their eyes. They did not send me to do sentry duty, or to the exercises. I should not have endured it. But morally I suffered terribly. The worst was I could not see any issue from this situation. I wrote to my uncle, begging him to get me transferred to this regiment, which, at least, goes into actions; besides, I thought I should here find Pável Dmítrievich, *qui est le fils de l'intendant de mon père,* — and he might be useful to me. My uncle did it for me, and I was transferred. After that other regiment, this one appeared to me like a gathering of gentlemen of the bedchamber. Then Pável Dmítrievich was here, and so they knew who I was and received me well. 'At the request of his uncle — Gúskov, *vous savez* — ' but I noticed that with these people, who have no education nor mental development, — they cannot respect a man and show him signs of respect if he lacks the aureole of wealth and distinction; I noticed that by degrees, when they saw that I was poor, their relations to me became ever more careless, until, at last, they grew to be almost contemptuous. It is terrible! But it is the whole truth.

"I have here been in actions, have fought, *on m'a vu au feu,*" he continued, "but when will it all end? I think never! My strength and energy are beginning to be exhausted. Then, I imagined *la guerre, la vie de camp,* but I see that it is entirely different: in short fur coats, unwashed, in soldier boots, — you go to some ambush and lie a whole night in a ravine with some Antónov who has been put in the army for drunkenness, and almost any minute either you or Antónov, it matters not who, may be shot from behind a bush. There is no question of bravery here, — it is terrible. *C'est affreux, ça tue.*"

"Well, you may now be promoted to be under-officer for the expedition, and next year you may be ensign," said I.

"Yes, I may, so I have been promised; but there are two years left yet, and then, I doubt it. If only one knew what it means to be here two years longer. Just imagine this life with Pável Dmítrievich: cards, coarse jests, carousals; you wish to say something which has been fermenting in your soul, and you are not understood, or they even laugh at you; you are spoken to, not in order to have an idea imparted to you, but, if possible, to be made a fool of. Everything is so base, coarse, and loathsome, and you are always made to feel that you are of low rank. It is for this reason that you will not be able to appreciate what a delight it is for me to talk *à cœur ouvert* with such a man as you are."

I did not quite understand what kind of a man he supposed me to be, and so I did not know what to answer.

"Will you have a lunch?" I was just then addressed by Nikíta, who had invisibly come up to me in the dark, and who, apparently, was dissatisfied with the presence of a stranger. "All there is left is cheese dumplings and a little chopped meat."

"Has the captain had his lunch?"

"He has been asleep for quite awhile," Nikíta answered, gruffly. To my order to bring us the lunch and some brandy, he involuntarily muttered something and started back for his tent. He grumbled there for awhile, but finally brought us the lunch-basket; he placed a candle on top of the basket, having first wrapped a paper around it to protect it from the wind, then a small saucepan, mustard in a small bottle, a tin wine-cup with a handle, and a bottle with absinthe. Having fixed all this, Nikíta stood for a few moments near us, watching Gúskov and me drinking brandy, which obviously was very disagreeable to him. In the dim light of the candle, shining through the paper and the surrounding darkness, could be seen only the sea-calf skin of the lunch-basket, the supper which stood upon it, and the face and fur coat of Gúskov,

and his small red hands, with which he was busy getting the dumplings out of the saucepan. All around us it was black, and only by looking closely was it possible to discern the black battery, the black figure of the sentry appearing through the breastwork, and on both sides of us the flames of the camp-fires, and above us the reddish stars.

Gúskov barely smiled sadly and shamefacedly, as though it made him feel uneasy to look me in the eyes after his confession. He drank another glass of brandy, and ate with zest, scraping out the pan.

"Still your acquaintance with the adjutant," I said, in order to say something, "must be a relief to you. I have heard that he is a very good man."

"Yes," replied Gúskov, "he is a good man, but he cannot be what he is not, — he cannot be a man, and with his education it cannot be expected he should." He suddenly seemed to be blushing. "Have you noticed this evening his coarse jokes about the ambush," and Gúskov, in spite of my repeated attempt to change the subject, began to justify himself to me, and to prove that he did not run away from the ambush, and that he was not a coward, such as the adjutant and Sh—— wanted to make him out.

"As I told you," he continued, wiping his hands on the fur coat, "such people cannot be considerate with a common soldier who has little money; that is above their strength. For the last five months, I have for some reason not been receiving anything from my sister, and I have noticed that they have changed to me since then. This short fur coat, which I bought from a soldier, and which does not keep me warm because the fur is all worn off" (he pointed to the worn-off skirt of his fur coat), "does not impress him with respect or compassion for misfortune, but with contempt, which he is unable to conceal. No matter how great my need is, as for example

now, when I have nothing to eat but the soldiers' mess, and nothing to wear," he continued, abashed, filling another glass of brandy for himself, "it does not occur to him to offer me a loan of money, when he is sure to get it back from me, but waits for me to ask him for it. And you can easily see how such relations with him must be irksome. Now, to you I would say it straight off, *vous êtes au dessus de cela, mon cher, je n'ai pas le sou.* And do you know," he said, suddenly casting a desperate glance at me, "I will tell you frankly I am now in a terrible condition: *pouvez-vous me prêter dix roubles argent?* My sister ought to send me some by the next post, *et mon père* — "

"Ah, with the greatest pleasure," I said, when, in reality, I was pained and annoyed, especially since, having the day before lost at cards, I had only something like five roubles, which Nikíta held for me. "Directly," I said, getting up, "I will go to the tent for it."

"No, later, *ne vous dérangez pas.*"

However, I paid no attention to his words, and crawled into the fastened tent, where my bed was standing and the captain was sleeping.

"Aleksyéy Iványch, let me have ten roubles, if you please, until pay-day," I said to the captain, shaking him.

"What, again cleaned out? And it was only yesterday that you said you would not play again," the captain muttered through his sleep.

"No, I have not been playing; but I need it, and so let me have it!"

"Makatyúk!" the captain called out to his orderly. "Bring me here the small safe with the money!"

"Softly, softly," I said, hearing Gúskov's measured steps outside the tent.

"What? Why softly?"

"The reduced man asked a loan of me. He is here."

"If I had known that, I would not have given it to

you," remarked the captain. "I have heard about him,— he is a perfectly worthless chap!" Still the captain handed me the money, gave his order to put the safe away securely and to close up the tent, and, again repeating, "If I had known what it was for, I would not have given it to you," wrapped his head with the coverlet. "You owe me now thirty-two, remember that," he called out to me.

When I came out of the tent, Gúskov was walking near the benches, and his small figure, with the crooked legs and monstrous cap with the long white nap, now appeared and now again disappeared in the dark, as he passed by the candle. He acted as though he did not notice me. I handed him the money. He said "*Merci*," and crumpling the money, put the bill into his trousers pocket.

"Now, I suppose, the game is at full blast with Pável Dmítrievich," he began soon after.

"Yes, I think so."

"He plays very strangely: always *à rebours*, and he never turns back; as long as luck is with him, it is all right, but the moment it does not work, he is liable to lose terribly. He has proven this to be a fact. During this expedition he has lost, if we count in the things, not less than fifteen hundred roubles. He used to play so cautiously before! And that officer of yours even doubted his honesty."

"He was just talking — Nikíta, haven't we any red wine left?" I said, very much relieved by Gúskov's garrulity.

Nikíta again grumbled, but brought us some red wine, and again in anger watched Gúskov emptying his glass. In Gúskov's address his former ease of manner came back. I wanted him to go away as soon as possible, and I thought the reason he did not leave was that he felt ashamed to leave soon after having received the money from me. I was silent.

"How could you, a man of means, without being compelled to do so, have made up your mind *de gaieté de cœur* to go and serve in the Caucasus? This is something I can't understand," he said to me.

I tried to justify my action, which appeared so strange to him.

"I surmise that this society of officers, men without any idea of culture, must be very annoying to you, too. You cannot understand each other. You may live ten years here without hearing or seeing anything but cards, wine, and talks about rewards and expeditions."

I was unpleasantly affected by his desire that I should share his conviction, and I quite sincerely assured him that I was very fond of cards, and wine, and talks about expeditions, and that I did not wish to have any finer companions than those whom I now had. But he would not believe me.

"You are just saying so," he continued, "but the absence of women, that is, I mean, *femmes comme il faut* — is that not a terrible deprivation? I do not know what I should be willing to give now if I could but for one minute be transferred to a drawing-room or at least through a chink look at a charming woman."

He was silent for a moment and gulped down another glass of red wine.

"Ah, my God, my God! maybe we shall some day meet again in St. Petersburg, and be and live with people, with women." He drank the last wine that was left in the bottle, after which he said: "Ah, pardon, you wanted, perhaps, some of it, — I am so absent-minded. I am afraid I have drunk too much, *et je n'ai pas la tête forte.* There was a time, when I lived on the Morskáya Street, *au rez-de-chaussée*, and I had charming quarters and had charming furniture: you know, I knew how to fix it all artistically, though not expensively; *mon père*, it is true, gave me porcelains, flowers, and fine silver articles. *Le*

matin je sortais, visits, *à cinq heures regulièrement* I drove to dinner at her house, and she was often alone. *Il faut avouer que c'était une femme ravissante!* Did you not know her? Not at all?"

"No."

"You know, femininity was developed in her in the highest degree, and tenderness, and then, what love! O Lord! I did not then fully appreciate all that happiness. Or, after theatre, we returned together and had a supper. It was never dull with her, *toujours gaie, toujours aimante.* No, I did not then understand what a rare happiness it was. *Et j'ai beaucoup à me reprocher* before her. *Je l'ai fait souffrir, et souvent* I was cruel. Ah, what a wonderful time that was! Are you annoyed?"

"Not in the least."

"Then I will tell you about our evenings. So I would walk in, — that staircase, every flower-pot I knew, — the door-knob, — all that was so charming and familiar; then the antechamber, her room — No, this will never, never return! She writes me even now, — I will show you her letters if you wish. But I am no longer what I was, — I am lost and unworthy of her. Yes, I am completely lost! *Je suis cassé.* There is in me neither energy, nor pride, — nothing. There is even no nobility. Yes, I am lost! And nobody will ever comprehend my suffering. It makes no difference to anybody. I am a lost man! I shall never rise again, because I am morally fallen — into the mire — fallen —" Just then there was heard in his words genuine, deep despair; he sat motionless and did not look at me.

"But why despair so?" I said to him.

"Because I am base: this life has destroyed me; everything which was in me has been killed. I am suffering now, not with pride, but with baseness, — there is no longer *dignité dans le malheur.* I am humiliated at every turn, and I endure everything and myself invite humilia-

tion. This mire has *déteint sur moi:* I have myself become coarse; I have forgotten what I knew, and can no longer speak French correctly; I feel that I am base and low. Under these circumstances I am unable, absolutely unable, to fight, or else I might have been a hero: give me a regiment, golden epaulettes, trumpeters, — but to march at the side of some savage Antón Bondarénko, and so forth, and to think that there is no difference between him and me, that it is a matter of indifference whether he or I be killed, — this thought is killing me. You understand how terrible it is to think that some beggar will kill me, a man who thinks and feels, and that it would not matter much if Antónov, a being that in no way differs from an animal, should be killed at my side, and that it is just as likely that I shall be killed, and not Antónov, as is always the case, *une fatalité* for everything high and good. I know that they call me a coward, — I am really a coward, and cannot be otherwise. Not only am I a coward, but, to their way of thinking, I am a beggar and a contemptible man. Now, I have just begged you for some money, and you have a right to despise me. No, take back your money," and he handed me the crumpled bill. "I want you to respect me." He covered his face with his hands and burst out into tears; I was absolutely at a loss what to say or do.

"Calm yourself," I said to him, "you are too sensitive. Don't take everything so to heart! Don't analyze, but look more simply at things! You say yourself that you have character. Endure it, for you have not much longer to suffer," I said to him, in an inarticulate way, because I was agitated both by a feeling of compassion and by a feeling of regret for having permitted myself mentally to condemn a truly and deeply unfortunate man.

"Yes," he began, "if I had heard but once during the time that I have been in this hell a single word of sympathy, advice, friendship, — a human word, such as I hear

from you, I might have been able to endure it all in peace, and I might have undertaken to be and could have been a soldier, but now it is terrible. When I judge soundly, I wish for death. Why should I care for a life of disgrace, and for myself who am lost to everything good in the world? And yet, at the least peril, I suddenly begin involuntarily to worship this mean life and to guard it as something precious, and I cannot, *je ne puis pas*, constrain myself. That is, I can," he continued again, after a minute's silence, "but it costs me too much labour, immense labour, when I am alone. With others, under ordinary conditions, when we go into action, I am brave, *j'ai fait mes preuves*, because I am egotistical and proud: that is my vice, and in the presence of others — Do you know, I will ask you to let me stay overnight with you, because in our tent they will be playing cards all night; anywhere will do me, — even on the ground."

While Nikíta was getting the bed ready we rose, and again walked up and down through the darkness along the battery. Gúskov's head was actually very light, for the two wine-glasses of brandy and the two glasses of wine made him stagger. When we got up and walked away from the light, I noticed that he put the ten-rouble bill, which he had been holding in his hand during the preceding conversation, into his pocket, so that I might not see him do it. He continued to speak, saying that he felt that he was still able to rise again, if he had a man like me to take interest in him.

We were on the point of going to the tent in order to lie down, when suddenly a bullet whizzed by us and lodged in the ground not far away. It was so strange, — this quiet, sleeping camp, our conversation, and suddenly the inimical bullet, which, God knew whence, flew amidst our tents, — it was all so strange that I was for quite awhile unable to account for what had happened. Our

soldier Andréev, who was doing sentry duty on the battery, moved up toward me.

"I declare they have stolen up on us! A fire could be seen down there," he said.

"The captain ought to be wakened," I said, looking at Gúskov.

He stood bent almost to the ground, and stammered, wishing to say something, "This — is — disagree— very — funny." He said nothing more, and I did not see how and where he momentarily disappeared.

In the captain's tent a candle was lighted; there was heard the usual waking cough, and he soon came out, asking for a linstock to light his pipe by.

"Why is it," he said, smiling, "that they will not let me go to sleep to-day? At first it is you with your reduced soldier, and then it is Shamyl. What shall we do? Shall we return the fire, or not? Was there nothing said about it in the order?"

"Nothing. There it is again," I said, "and this time from two." In reality, toward the right and ahead of us, two fires flashed in the darkness, like two eyes, and soon a ball flew past us, and another, apparently one of our empty shells, which produced a loud and penetrating shriek. The soldiers crept out from the adjoining tents, and one could hear them clearing their throats, stretching themselves, and talking.

"Hear them whistle through the eyelet, just like nightingales," remarked an artillerist.

"Call Nikíta," said the captain, with his habitual kindly smile. "Nikíta! Don't hide yourself! Come and listen to the mountain nightingales!"

"Your Honour," said Nikíta, standing near the captain, "I have seen these nightingales before, and I am not afraid of them; but the guest who was here and who has been drinking your red wine, — the moment he heard it, he cut and ran past our tent, all bent up like some beast!"

THE SNOW-STORM

A Story

1856

THE SNOW-STORM

A Story

I.

It was after six o'clock when I, having drunk tea, left the station, the name of which I do not remember, but which, I remember, was somewhere in the Land of the Don Army, near Novocherkásk. It was already dark when I seated myself at Aléshka's side in the sleigh and wrapped myself in my fur coat and blanket. Near the post-house the air seemed to be warm and calm. Although there was no snow falling, not a single star could be seen overhead, and the sky seemed unusually low and black as compared with the pure snow plain, which lay stretched out in front of us.

After passing the dark forms of windmills, one of which awkwardly flapped its large wings, and getting beyond the Cossack village, I noticed that the road became worse and deeper with snow. The wind began to blow more fiercely on my left, to blow aside the tails and manes of the horses, and stubbornly to raise and carry away the snow which was crumbled by the runners and hoofs. The bell began to tinkle less audibly. A spray of cold air ran up my back through some opening in my sleeve, and I thought of the post inspector's advice not to

travel in order to avoid going astray in the night and freezing on the road.

"I hope we shall not lose our way," I said to the driver. Not receiving any answer from him, I put the question more clearly: "Well, shall we reach the next station, driver? Shall we not go astray?"

"God knows," he answered, without turning his head around. "I declare there is a blizzard! Not a bit of the road can be seen. O Lord!"

"I wish you would tell me whether you will bring me to the next station," I continued. "Shall we get there?"

"We must get there," said the driver. He continued to speak, but I could not hear him through the wind.

I did not wish to turn back; nor did it seem at all pleasant to wander about all night in the frost and snow-storm in an absolutely barren plain, such as this part of the Land of the Don Army was. Besides, although I could not get a good look at my driver in the dark, I for some reason did not like him, and he did not inspire me with confidence in him. He sat straight, with his feet before him, and not sidewise. He was of tall stature; his voice was lazy; his cap was somehow not a driver's cap, — it was large and it swayed from side to side. Nor did he urge his horses on as is proper, but held the reins in both his hands, like a lackey who has taken the coachman's box. Above everything else, I did not trust him because his ears were wrapped in a kerchief. In short, this solemn, stooping back, which towered in front of me, did not please me, and promised no good.

"In my opinion, it would be best to return," Aléshka said to me. "What pleasure is there in wandering about?"

"O Lord! Just see what a blast is blowing! I can't see the road at all, — my eyes are all stuck together — O Lord!" grumbled the driver.

We had not gone fifteen minutes when the driver

stopped his horses, turned the reins over to Aléshka, awkwardly straightened out his legs from the seat, and, crunching the snow with his big boots, went away to look for the road.

"What is it? Where are you going? Lost the road, eh?" I asked him; but the driver did not make any reply. He turned his face away from the wind which cut his face and walked away from the sleigh.

"Well? Found it?" I repeated when he came back.

"No, nothing," he suddenly said, impatiently and angrily, as though I were to blame for his having lost the road. Leisurely placing his large feet on the foot-rest, he began with his frosted hands to separate the reins.

"What are we going to do?" I asked him, when we started again.

"What shall we do? We shall travel whither God will take us."

We proceeded in the same amble, now obviously at random, in more than half a foot of loose snow, or over the brittle and bare crust.

Although it was cold, the snow on my collar melted very rapidly; the blizzard kept growing stronger, and from above began to fall a light, crisp snow.

It was evident that we were travelling God knows where, because, after having journeyed another fifteen minutes, we no longer saw a single verst post.

"Well, what do you think?" I again asked the driver, "shall we reach the station?"

"Which station? We can get back if we give the reins to the horses; they will take us back; but hardly to the next station — we shall only be lost."

"Well, let them go back," I said. "And really —"

"So you want to go back?" said the driver.

"Yes, yes, turn back!"

The driver gave the horses the reins. They began to run faster, and, although I did not notice that we were

turning; the wind soon changed, and soon the windmills could be seen through the snow. The driver became bolder and began to talk.

"The other day the return sleighs got caught in a storm," he said, "so they had to stay overnight in haystacks. They came back only in the morning. It was lucky they did find those haystacks, or else they would have frozen stiff, — it was so cold. As it is, one of them had his feet so frost-bitten that we thought for three weeks that he would die."

"It is not cold now and the wind has gone down," said I, "so maybe we could try it."

"That is so, it is warm, but it is blowing hard. It is now at our back, so it seems lighter, but it is blowing hard. I could go if it were on courier duty or something of the kind, but not of my own will. It is no joke to have your passenger frozen. They will make me responsible for you."

II.

JUST then were heard the bells of several tróykas which were rapidly catching up with us.

"A courier bell," said my driver. "There is only one such at the whole station."

In reality, the bell of the first sleigh, the sound of which was clearly borne to us through the air, was very fine: pure, melodious, deep, and slightly quivering. I later learned that it was the arrangement of a fancier, and consisted of three bells, of a large one in the middle, with what is popularly called a wagtail sound, and of two small ones, tuned at thirds with it. The sound of this third and of the quivering fifth, which reëchoed in the air, was exceedingly striking and strangely agreeable in this desert steppe.

"The post is running," said my driver, as the first of the three sleighs came abreast ours. "How is the road? Is it possible to travel upon it?" he cried to the driver of the last sleigh; but this one only shouted to his horses, and made no reply.

The sound of the bells quickly died away in the wind as soon as the post passed us.

Apparently my driver felt ashamed.

"I suppose we had better go now, sir!" he said to me. "People have just passed over it, and so their tracks will be fresh."

I agreed with him, and we again turned against the wind, and moved forward over the deep snow. I looked sidewise on the road, so as not to lose sight of the track

made by the sleighs. For about two versts the track was clearly visible; then there could be seen only a small unevenness under the runners; but before long I was absolutely unable to tell whether it was a track or simply a drifted layer of snow. The eyes got tired looking at the monotonously disappearing snow under the runners, and I began to look ahead of me. We still saw the third verst-post, but were entirely unable to find the fourth; as before, we travelled against the wind and with the wind, to the right and to the left, and finally we reached a point when my driver said that we had strayed to the right, while I said it was to the left, and Aléshka proved that we were going directly back.

We again stopped several times, and the driver dragged out his large feet and went out to find the road, but all in vain. I myself went once to see whether that which so appeared to me was really the road; but no sooner had I with difficulty made six steps against the wind, and convinced myself that everywhere were the same monotonous, white layers of snow, and that the road existed only in my imagination, than I no longer saw the sleigh. I called out: "Driver! Aléshka!" but I felt how the wind caught the voice out of my mouth and in a twinkling carried it away far from me, into the distance. I went where the sleigh was, but it was not there; I went to the right, and it was not there, either. I am ashamed to recall in what loud, penetrating, yes, even a little despairing, voice I shouted once more, "Driver!" when he was within no more than two feet of me. His black figure, with his small whip and enormous cap fallen to one side, suddenly loomed up before me. He took me to the sleigh.

"Luckily it is warm," he said, "or else, if it should freeze, it would be terrible! — O Lord!"

"Give the horses the reins: let them take us back," I said, seating myself in the sleigh. "Will they take us back? Eh, driver?"

"They certainly will."

He dropped the reins, two or three times struck the harness pad of the centre horse with his whip, and we again went somewhere. We travelled about half an hour. Suddenly the fancier's bell and two others were heard in front of us: this time they were moving toward us. Those were the same tróykas, which had deposited the mail and now were going back with return horses to the station. The courier tróyka of large horses with the fancier's bell was swiftly running in front. A driver was sitting on the box and briskly calling out to his horses. Back of him, in the body of each empty sleigh, sat two drivers, and one could hear their loud and merry conversation. One of them was smoking a pipe, and a spark, fanned by the wind, illuminated part of his face.

As I looked at them I felt ashamed of being afraid to travel, and my driver, evidently, was experiencing the same feeling, for we said in one voice: "Let us follow them!"

III.

BEFORE allowing the last tróyka to pass by, my driver began awkwardly to turn back and drove the shafts into the horses tied behind. Three of the horses shied, tore off the halter, and started to run to one side.

"You cross-eyed devil, can't you see how to turn? Straight upon people! You devil!" A short driver, an old man, so far as I could judge from his voice and stature, who was seated in the last sleigh, began to curse in a hoarse and quivering voice. He quickly jumped out of the sleigh and ran after the horses, continuing to curse profanely, and to call my driver all kinds of names.

The horses were not easily taken. The driver ran after them, and in a minute the horses and the driver were lost in the white mist of the snow-storm.

"Vasíl-i! Let me have the dun horse! I can't catch them this way," his voice was still heard.

One of the drivers, a very tall man, climbed out of the sleigh, silently unhitched his tróyka, over the side band climbed upon one of the horses, and, crunching over the snow at an ambling pace, was lost in the same direction.

But we, with the other two tróykas, started across fields behind the courier sleigh, which, tinkling with its bell, raced at full gallop ahead of us.

"Of course he will not catch them!" my driver said, in respect to the one who had started after the horses.

"Since the accursed centre horse has not gone back to the other horses, it will take them where there will be no way out."

From the time that my driver began travelling back of the others he became more cheerful and talkative, a fact of which I did not fail to take advantage, since I did not yet feel like sleeping. I began to ask him where he came from, what he was doing, and how he was getting on, and I soon learned that he was a countryman of mine, from the Government of Túla, village of Kirpíchnoe, and a manorial peasant; that they had little land left, and that since the cholera they had had no good crop of grain; that there were two brothers in the family, while a third was a soldier; that their grain would not last until Christmas, and so they lived by outside earnings; that the younger brother was the manager of the household, because he was married, while he himself was a widower; that peasants from his village came here every year in artéls to hire out as drivers; that he had never driven before, but that he had taken a place on the post in order to support his brother; that he, thank God, earned 120 roubles in assignats a year, from which sum he sent one hundred home; and that life would be passable here, if the couriers were not such beasts, and the people such a swearing lot.

"What reason did that driver have to swear so? O Lord! Did I tear away the horses on purpose? Do I mean anybody's harm? And what made him gallop away after them? They would come back in time, anyway. As it is, he will only wear the horses out, and will be lost himself," repeated the God-fearing peasant.

"What is that black spot?" I asked, noticing a few black objects in front of us.

"A caravan. How nice it is to travel that way!" he continued, when we came abreast with huge, mat-covered wheeled wagons, following each other. "You see, not a man is to be seen, — they are all asleep. Those are intelligent horses: they know the way and can't go astray. I have travelled with freight," he added, "so I know."

It was really strange to see those immense wagons covered with snow from the mat top to the wheels and moving all along. Only in the front corner a mat, covered two fingers deep with snow, was raised a little, and for a moment a cap stuck out from it just as our bells tinkled past the caravan.

A large, piebald horse, stretching its neck and straining its back, stepped evenly over the trackless road, monotonously shook its shaggy head under the whitened arch, and pricked one of its snow-covered ears, as we came abreast with it.

Having travelled another half-hour, the driver again turned to me:

"Well, sir, what do you think? Are we travelling in the right direction?"

"I do not know," I answered.

"At first there was a terrible wind, but now we are having good weather. No, we are not going right,—we are wandering again," he concluded, with the greatest calm.

It was evident that, notwithstanding the fact that he was inclined to be a coward, he—as the proverb says, In company death is agreeable—became entirely self-possessed when he saw that there were many of us, and he did not have to guide or be responsible. He in the most indifferent manner made observations on the blunders of the guiding driver, as though he were not in the least concerned in the matter. And, in fact, I noticed that the sleigh in the van at times showed its profile on my left and at others on my right; it even seemed to me that we were circling in a very small space. However, that might have been an optical illusion, even as I was led to believe that the van sleigh was going up-hill or down-hill, or on an incline, whereas the steppe was absolutely flat.

Having travelled a little while longer, I noticed, as I thought, far away near the horizon, a long, black, moving

line; a minute later it became clear to me that it was the same caravan which we had caught up with before. The snow just as before covered the squeaking wheels, several of which did not even turn; the men were still sleeping under the mats, and the piebald horse of the van in the same way expanded its nostrils in order to scent the road, and pricked its ears.

"I declare, we have been circling and circling and have come back to the same caravan," my driver said, in a dissatisfied voice. "The courier horses are good, so it does not hurt them to run around recklessly, but ours will soon stop if we are going to travel all night."

He cleared his throat.

"Let us turn back, sir, to save ourselves."

"What for? We shall get somewhere soon."

"Where? We shall pass the night on the steppe. How it is blowing — O Lord!"

Although I was surprised to see the guiding driver, who obviously had lost both road and direction, not trying to find the road but racing at full gallop with merry shouts, I did not wish to fall behind them.

"Follow them," I said.

The driver started his horses and drove them more unwillingly than before. He no longer turned back to talk to me.

IV.

THE storm grew stronger and stronger, and from above fell crisp, tiny flakes of snow. I thought it was beginning to freeze: my nose and cheeks felt more frosty than before, a spray of cold air more frequently found its way under my fur coat, and it became necessary to wrap myself well. Now and then the sleigh rattled over a bare, crusted spot from which the snow had drifted. I had now travelled nearly six hundred versts without staying anywhere overnight, and so, although I was interested in the outcome of our straying, I involuntarily closed my eyes and began to doze.

Once, as I opened my eyes, I was struck for a moment by what seemed to be a bright light that illumined the white plain: the horizon had widened considerably; the low, black sky had suddenly disappeared; on all sides could be seen white, slanting lines of falling snow. The form of the sleigh in front was more distinct, and as I looked up I thought in the first moment that the clouds were dispersed and that the falling snow covered the sky. Just as I awoke, the moon had arisen and was casting its cold bright light through the loose clouds and the falling snow.

What I saw clearly was my sleigh, the horses, the driver, and the three sleighs in front of me: the first, the courier's, in which the driver was sitting alone on the box and driving at an easy trot; the second, in which sat two men, who, having thrown down the reins and made a

windbreak of a cloak, were all the time smoking a pipe, as could be seen by the sparks which flashed there; and the third, where no one was to be seen, and where in all likelihood the driver was sleeping in the body of the sleigh. The guiding driver, as I awoke, occasionally stopped his horses in order to look for the road. Every time we stopped the howling of the wind became more audible, and I could see more clearly a surprisingly large quantity of snow which was borne through the air. In the snow-shrouded moonlight I saw the short figure of the driver, with his whip-handle in his hand, testing the snow in front of him and moving up and down in the dim mist; then again he walked up to the sleigh, jumped sideways on the box, and again, above the monotonous whistling of the wind could be heard his brisk, sonorous calls and the tinkling of the bells. Whenever the driver of the first sleigh climbed out to find signs of the road or haystacks, there proceeded from the second sleigh the vivacious, self-confident voice of one of the drivers calling out to the guide:

"Oh, there, Ignáshka! We have borne too much to the left: bear to the right, under the wind;" or, "Don't circle about in vain! Keep to the snow just as it lies and we shall come out all right;" or, "How you are straying! Unhitch the piebald horse and let him lead: he will take you out to the road. That will be better!"

The one who was counselling this not only did not unhitch the off-horse or go out on the snow to find the road, but did not even put his nose out from behind his cloak; and when Ignáshka, the guide, to one of his counsels shouted to him to take the lead himself if he knew so well where to drive, the counsellor replied that if he ran a courier sleigh that would be exactly what he would do, and he would bring us out on the road. "But our horses will not take the lead in a blizzard!" he called out. "They are not that kind of horses!"

"Then don't bother me!" Ignáshka replied, merrily whistling to his horses.

The other driver who was sitting in the same sleigh with the counsellor said nothing to Ignáshka, and in general took no part in the matter, although he was not yet asleep, as I concluded from his inextinguishable pipe, and because when we stopped I heard his measured, uninterrupted talk. Only once, when Ignáshka stopped for the sixth or seventh time, he apparently became annoyed at the interruption of his pleasant ride and called out to him:

"What are you stopping for? I declare, he wants to find the road! Don't you know it is a snow-storm? Even an engineer could not find the road now. Keep on as long as the horses pull you! Don't be afraid, we shall not freeze to death — Go, I say!"

"Indeed! A postilion was frozen to death last year!" my driver interposed.

The driver of the third sleigh did not wake up all that time. Once, during a stop, the counsellor shouted:

"Filípp! Oh, Filípp!" and receiving no reply, he remarked: "I wonder whether he is frozen. Ignáshka, you had better take a look."

Ignáshka, who had time for everything, walked over to the sleigh and began to push the sleeper.

"Just see how half a bottle has knocked him down! If you are frozen, say so!" he said, shaking him.

The sleeper muttered something and uttered a curse.

"He is alive, friends!" said Ignáshka, and again he ran ahead. We started once more, this time so fast that the small bay off-horse of my sleigh, which continually received the whip on its tail, more than once jumped up in an awkward small gallop.

V.

I THINK it must have been about midnight when the old man and Vasíli, who had gone after the stray horses, came up to us. They had found and caught the horses, and then fell in with us; but it will always remain a puzzle to me how they did that in the dark, blind snow-storm and on the barren steppe. The old man, swinging his elbows and legs, was riding at a trot on the centre horse, while the side horses were tied to the arch; for in a snow-storm the horses may not be let loose. When he came abreast with us he again began to call my driver opprobrious names:

"I declare he is a cross-eyed devil! Really —"

"Oh, Uncle Mítrich," the story-teller in the second sleigh shouted, "are you alive? Come into our sleigh!"

The old man made no reply to him, and continued to curse. When he thought he had said enough he rode up to the second sleigh.

"Did you get them all?" somebody in the second sleigh asked.

"I should say so!"

His small figure threw itself with its breast on the back of the trotting horse, then leaped down on the snow, and without stopping ran to the sleigh and rolled itself in, its legs sticking out above the rounds of the body of the sleigh. Tall Vasíli silently seated himself, just as before, in the first sleigh with Ignáshka, and both together began to look for the road.

"What a swearer — O Lord!" mumbled my driver.

We then travelled for a long time, without stopping, over the white desert, in the cold, transparent, and quivering light of the snow-storm. I would open my eyes, — and the same clumsy cap and back, covered with snow, towered before me; the same low arch, under which the head of the centre horse, with its black mane evenly flaunting in the wind, was swaying the same length between the tightly stretched bridle-straps; beyond the back could be seen the same right-side horse, with its tail tied short and its splinter-bar occasionally striking against the wicker body of the sleigh.

I would look down, — and there the same crisp snow was torn up by the runners and stubbornly raised by the wind and carried to one side. In front, the guiding sleigh ran at the same constant distance; on the right and left everything looked white and dim. The eye looked in vain for a new object: there was to be seen neither post, nor stack, nor fence. Everywhere everything was white, white, and in motion: now the horizon seemed to be immeasurably distant, now to be reduced on all sides to within two feet of me; suddenly a white, tall wall grew out on the right of me and ran along the sleigh, and now it disappeared to grow out in front again, in order to run farther and farther away and to disappear once more.

I would look up, — and at first it seemed light, as though I could see the stars through the snow mist; but the stars ran away from view higher and higher, and I saw only the snow which fell past my eyes upon my face and the collar of my fur coat. The sky was everywhere equally bright, equally white, colourless, monotonous, and constantly motionless. The wind seemed to change: now it blew into my face and stuck my eyes together with snow; now it angrily on one side flapped the collar of my fur coat over my head or scornfully switched my face with it; now it moaned behind me through some chink.

There was heard the feeble, uninterrupted crunching of

the hoofs and runners on the snow, and the dull clanking of the bells, as we rode over the deep snow. Occasionally, when we went against the wind, and over a bared frozen crust, there were borne to us through the air the energetic whistling of Ignáshka, and the liquid sound of the bell with the echoing and tremulous fifth, and these sounds suddenly gave relief to the dreary character of the desert, and then again sounded monotonously, playing all the time with insufferable exactness the tune which I imagined I was hearing. One of my feet began to freeze, and when I turned around in order to wrap myself better, the snow, which covered my collar and cap, fell down behind my neck and made me shudder; but I was, in general, still warm in my fur coat, and sleepiness overpowered me.

VI.

RECOLLECTIONS and pictures with increased velocity alternated in my imagination.

"The counsellor who is all the time calling out in the second sleigh, I wonder what kind of a peasant he may be? No doubt he is red-haired, stout, with short legs," I think, "just like Fédor Filíppych, our old butler." And I see the staircase of our big house, and five manorial servants stepping heavily on towels, as they drag a piano out of the wing. I see Fédor Filíppych, with the rolled up sleeves of his nankeen coat, carrying one pedal, running ahead, unfastening a bolt, pulling here at the towel, giving a push there, creeping between the people's legs, being in everybody's way, and never ceasing to cry in an anxious voice:

"Back, you people in front! That's it! Lift the tail end! Up, up, and carry it through the door! That's it!"

"Just let us do it alone, Fédor Filíppych," timidly remarks the gardener, jammed against the balustrade, red with straining, with the greatest exertion holding up a corner of the grand.

But Fédor Filíppych does not cease worrying.

"What is this?" I reflect. "Does he imagine that he is useful and necessary for the common work, or is he simply glad because God has given him that self-confident, persuasive eloquence, and delighted because he is squandering it? It must be so." And I, for some reason, see the pond, the tired servants, who, knee-deep in the water, are dragging a seine, and again Fédor Filíppych with a

watering-pot, shouting to everybody, running up and down the shore, and occasionally walking up to the pond in order, by holding back the golden carps with his hand, to let the turbid water flow out and to take up fresh water.

And now it is noon, in the month of July. I am going somewhere over the newly mown grass of the orchard, under the burning and direct rays of the sun; I am still very young, and I am lacking something and wishing for something. I go to the pond, to my favourite place, between the brier-bushes and the birch avenue, and lie down to sleep. I remember the feeling with which I, lying down, look through the red, prickly stems of the brier upon the black globules of dry earth, and the glinting light blue mirror of the pond. It is the feeling of a certain naïve self-satisfaction and sadness. Everything around me is so beautiful and all that beauty so affects me, that it seems to me that I myself am good, and the one thing that annoys me is that nobody admires me.

It is hot. I try to fall asleep in order to find consolation; but the flies, the unendurable flies, give me no rest even here, begin to gather around me, and stubbornly and stiffly, like knuckle-bones, keep leaping from my forehead to my hands.

A bee buzzes not far from me in the hottest place; yellow-winged butterflies fly exhausted from blade to blade. I look up: my eyes pain, — the sun burns too brightly through the light foliage of the curly birch-tree, which sways its boughs high above me and softly, and I feel hotter still.

I cover my face with my handkerchief: I feel suffocated, and the flies seem to stick to my hands on which exudes perspiration.

In the brier thicket the sparrows begin to fuss. One of them has leaped down on the ground, about two feet from me: he twice pretends to pick at the ground, and, rustling in the twigs, and giving a merry chirp, he flies

out of the thicket; another, too, leaps down on the ground, raises his tail, looks about him, and flies away after the first, like an arrow, with a twittering.

On the pond are heard the strokes of the beetles on the wet clothes, and these strokes reëcho, and are, as it were, carried downward, over the surface of the pond. I hear the laughter and chatting and plashing of bathers.

A gust of wind makes the tops of the birches rustle at a distance from me; now it comes nearer, and I hear it stir the grass, and now the leaves of the brier thicket get into commotion and flap on their branches; and now, raising a corner of my handkerchief and tickling my perspiring face, a fresh spray has reached me.

A fly has found its way through the opening of the raised handkerchief, and in fright flutters about my moist mouth. A dry twig presses against my back. No, I can't lie any longer: I will go to take a swim. But just then I hear some hasty steps near that very brier thicket, and a woman's frightened voice:

"O Lord! What shall we do? And no men around!"

"What is it? What?" I, running out into the sun, ask the servant woman who runs, sobbing, past me. She only looks back on me, sways her hands, and runs ahead. And now here is seventy-year-old Matréna, holding down the kerchief with her hand, as it slips from her head, tripping along, dragging one foot in a woollen stocking, and running to the pond. Two girls run, holding each other's hands, and a ten-year-old boy, in his father's coat, clutching the hempen skirt of one of them, follows.

"What has happened?" I ask them.

"A peasant has drowned."

"Where?"

"In the pond."

"Who? One of ours?"

"No, a transient."

Coachman Iván, scuffing his huge boots over the mown

grass, and fat steward Yákov, drawing breath with difficulty, run to the pond, and I after them.

I remember the feeling which said to me: "Jump in and pull out the peasant! Save him, and everybody will admire you," which was precisely what I wanted.

"But where, where?" I ask the crowd of manorial servants collected on the shore.

"Over yonder, right in the whirlpool, near the other shore, almost near the bath-house," says the laundress, putting the wet clothes on the yoke. "I saw him dive under; then he appeared again, and again went out of sight; he showed up once more, and cried, 'People, I am drowning!' and again went down, — nothing but bubbles came up. Then I knew that a man was drowning, so I yelled, 'People, a man is drowning!'"

The laundress swings the yoke on her shoulder, and, waddling sidewise, walks over a foot-path away from the pond.

"What a misfortune!" says Yákov Ivánov, the steward, in a desperate voice. "What a lot of trouble there will now be with the rural court! There will be no getting rid of it!"

A peasant with a scythe makes his way through the crowd of women, children, and old men, who are gathered at the farther shore, and, hanging his scythe on the branch of a willow, slowly takes off his boots.

"Where is it? Where did he drown?" I keep asking, wishing to jump in there and do something unusual.

I have pointed out to me the smooth surface of the pond, which the passing breeze ripples now and then. I cannot make out how he has drowned: the water continues to stand just as smoothly, beautifully, and indifferently above him, resplendent in the gold of the afternoon sun, and it seems to me that I am unable to do anything, and that I shall not surprise any one, especially since I am a poor swimmer; meanwhile the peasant is pulling

the shirt over his head, ready to jump in. All look at him in hope and breathless expectancy; but having gone into the water up to his shoulders, the peasant slowly returns and puts on his shirt, — he cannot swim.

More and more people run up, and the crowd grows bigger and bigger; the women hold on to each other; but nobody offers any aid. Those who have just arrived give all kinds of advice, and sigh, and fright and despair are depicted in their faces; of those who have been there awhile, some, being tired of standing, sit down on the grass, while others go back. Old Matréna asks her daughter whether she has closed the damper of the stove; the boy in his father's coat with precision throws pebbles into the water.

But now, barking and looking back in doubt, Trezórka, Fédor Filíppych's dog, comes running down-hill; and now his own form, running down-hill and shouting something, appears from behind the brier thicket.

"What are you standing for?" he calls out, taking off his coat on the run. "A man has drowned, and they stand there! Let me have a rope!"

Everybody looks in hope and fear at Fédor Filíppych while he, holding with his hand the shoulder of an obliging servant, with the tip of his left boot pulls off the heel of his right.

"Over there, where the people are standing, over there, a little to the right of the willow, Fédor Filíppych! Over there," somebody says to him.

"I know," he answers, and, frowning, no doubt in reply to the signs of shame expressed in the crowd of women, pulls off his shirt and takes down his cross, which he hands to the gardener's boy, who is standing before him in an attitude of admiration. Then, stepping energetically over the mown grass, he goes up to the pond.

Trezórka, perplexed as to the cause of the swift movements of his master, has stopped near the crowd and,

having swallowed with a smacking noise several grass-blades near the shore, looks questioningly at him, and with a merry yap throws himself into the water with his master.

At first nothing is seen but foam and spray, which reaches us on the shore; then Fédor Filíppych gracefully swings his arms and, evenly raising and lowering his back, with a hand over hand motion, briskly swims to the other shore. Trezórka gets his mouth full of water, hurriedly turns back, shakes himself off near the crowd, and on his back dries himself on the shore.

While Fédor Filíppych is reaching the other shore, two coachmen run up to the willow with a seine rolled up on a stick. Fédor Filíppych for some reason or other raises his arms, dives once, twice, a third time, every time letting a stream of water out of his mouth, handsomely tossing his hair, and not answering the questions which are hurled at him on all sides. Finally he comes out on the shore, and, so far as I can see, is busy merely with giving orders about the spreading of the seine. The seine is dragged out, but there is nothing in the net but ooze, and a few small carps wiggling in it. While the seine is thrown out again I pass over to the other side.

All that is heard is the voice of Fédor Filíppych giving orders, the plashing of the wet rope in the water, and sighs of terror. The wet rope, which is attached to the right wing, is ever more covered with grass, and comes ever farther out of the water.

"Now pull together, as one man, pull!" shouts Fédor Filíppych. The water-soaked floats make their appearance.

"There is something coming! It pulls hard, friends," somebody calls out.

Now the wings with two or three little carps wriggling in them are pulled out on the shore, where they wet and

crush the grass. And now through the thin, quivering layer of troubled water there appears something white in the stretched net. A sigh of terror, not loud, but impressively audible amidst the dead silence, runs through the crowd.

"Pull, harder, out to the shore!" is heard the determined voice of Fédor Filíppych, and the drowned man is dragged out to the willow, over the mowed-down stubbles of burdock and agrimony.

And now I see my good old aunt in a silk dress; I see her lilac parasol with a lace edge, which is somehow out of keeping with this picture of death, so terrible in its simplicity; I see her face, which is ready to burst out into tears. I remember the disappointment expressed in her face because she could not make any use of arnica in this case; I also remember the painful, aggravating feeling which I experienced when she said to me, with a naïve egotism of love: "Come, my dear! Oh, how terrible this is! And you always go out swimming by yourself!"

I remember how brightly and hotly the sun baked the powdery earth underfoot; how it played on the mirror of the pond; how the large carps plashed near the shore, while schools of small fish rippled the middle of the smooth pond; how a hawk circled high in the air, hovering over the ducklings which, dousing and splashing, swam out from the reeds into the pond; how the white, curly storm-clouds gathered near the horizon; how the mud which had been brought out on the shore by the seine slowly receded, and how, walking along the dam, I again heard the strokes of the beetle, as they reëcho over the pond.

But this beetle sounds as though two beetles were tuned to thirds, and this sound torments and exhausts me, the more so since I know that this beetle is a bell, and Fédor Filíppych will not make it stop. This beetle,

like an instrument of torture, compresses my foot, which is freezing, — and I fall asleep.

I was awakened, as I thought, by our very rapid ride, and by two voices calling out right near me:

"Say, Ignáshka! Oh, Ignáshka!" said the voice of my driver. "Take my passenger! You have to drive there anyway, but why should I wander about uselessly? Take him!"

Ignáshka's voice called out over me: "What pleasure is there for me to be responsible for the passenger? Will you put up a bottle?"

"A bottle! Half a bottle will do."

"Half a bottle, I declare!" shouts another voice. "To wear out the horses for half a bottle!"

I opened my eyes. The same insufferable, quivering snow blinded my eyes; there were the same drivers and horses, but I saw some other sleigh near me. My driver had caught up with Ignáshka, and we for a long time drove side by side. Although a voice from the other sleigh advised him not to take less than a bottle, Ignáshka suddenly stopped his sleigh.

"Load them over! So be it! It is your luck! You will put up the half bottle to-morrow when we come back. Have you much luggage?"

My driver jumped out into the snow, with unusual vivacity for him, bowed to me, and asked me to seat myself in Ignáshka's sleigh. I had no objection; it was evident that the God-fearing peasant was so happy over it that he wished to pour out his gratitude and joy on somebody: he bowed and thanked me, Aléshka, and Ignáshka.

"Well, thank God! What was it for anyway, O Lord! We have been driving half the night, and we do not know whither we are going. He will get you there safely, sir, while my horses are all worn out."

He transferred the things with increased alacrity.

While the things were being transferred, I went with

the wind, which almost lifted me off my feet, to the second sleigh. This sleigh was one-fourth covered with snow, particularly on the side where the cloak had been put out as a protection against the wind over the heads of the two drivers; but back of the cloak it was pleasant and comfortable. The old man was lying as before with his legs dangling over the side, and the story-teller continued his tale: "At the same time as the general comes, you see, in the name of the king, to Mary, in the prison, just at that time Mary says to him: 'General, I have no need of you, and cannot love you, and so, you see, you are not my lover; but my lover is that same prince.'

"At the same time —" he went on, but, seeing me, he grew silent for a moment and began to fan the spark on his pipe.

"Well, sir, have you come to us to hear a tale?" said the other, whom I have called the counsellor.

"Yes, it is nice and jolly here with you!" I said.

"It drives away dulness. At least, you have no time to think."

"Do you not know where we are now?"

This question did not please the drivers, so I thought.

"Who can make out where? Maybe we have driven into the Calmuck country," replied the counsellor.

"What are we going to do?" I asked.

"What are we going to do? We will keep driving, and maybe we shall get somewhere," he said, in a dissatisfied voice.

"But if we do not, and the horses stick in the snow, what then?"

"Why, nothing."

"But we shall freeze to death."

"Of course, that is possible, because we can't see any haystacks now: evidently we have got into the Calmuck country. Above everything else we must watch the snow."

"Are you afraid, sir, you will freeze?" asked the old man, in a trembling voice.

Although he seemed to be making fun of me, he apparently was chilled to his bones.

"Yes, it is getting very cold," said I.

"Ah, sir! You ought to do the way I do: don't mind it, and take a run, and you will feel warmer."

"It's great to run behind the sleigh," said the counsellor.

the wind, which almost lifted me off my feet, to the second sleigh. This sleigh was one-fourth covered with snow, particularly on the side where the cloak had been put out as a protection against the wind over the heads of the two drivers; but back of the cloak it was pleasant and comfortable. The old man was lying as before with his legs dangling over the side, and the story-teller continued his tale: "At the same time as the general comes, you see, in the name of the king, to Mary, in the prison, just at that time Mary says to him: 'General, I have no need of you, and cannot love you, and so, you see, you are not my lover; but my lover is that same prince.'

"At the same time —" he went on, but, seeing me, he grew silent for a moment and began to fan the spark on his pipe.

"Well, sir, have you come to us to hear a tale?" said the other, whom I have called the counsellor.

"Yes, it is nice and jolly here with you!" I said.

"It drives away dulness. At least, you have no time to think."

"Do you not know where we are now?"

This question did not please the drivers, so I thought.

"Who can make out where? Maybe we have driven into the Calmuck country," replied the counsellor.

"What are we going to do?" I asked.

"What are we going to do? We will keep driving, and maybe we shall get somewhere," he said, in a dissatisfied voice.

"But if we do not, and the horses stick in the snow, what then?"

"Why, nothing."

"But we shall freeze to death."

"Of course, that is possible, because we can't see any haystacks now: evidently we have got into the Calmuck country. Above everything else we must watch the snow."

"Are you afraid, sir, you will freeze?" asked the old man, in a trembling voice.

Although he seemed to be making fun of me, he apparently was chilled to his bones.

"Yes, it is getting very cold," said I.

"Ah, sir! You ought to do the way I do: don't mind it, and take a run, and you will feel warmer."

"It's great to run behind the sleigh," said the counsellor.

VII.

"PLEASE, all is ready!" Aléshka cried to me, from the front sleigh.

The snow-storm was so severe that only by bending over and clutching the skirts of my overcoat with both my hands was I able with the greatest difficulty to make the few steps which separated me from the sleigh, over the drifting snow which was carried away from under my feet. My former driver was already kneeling in the middle of the empty sleigh; but, upon seeing me, he raised his large cap, whereat the wind furiously flaunted his hair, and asked me for a *pourboire*. No doubt, he did not expect anything, for my refusal did not in the least disappoint him. He thanked me anyway, shoved his cap back on his head, and said to me: "Well, sir, God grant you —" and, jerking his reins and smacking his lips, he moved away from us. Soon after Ignáshka, too, swayed with his whole back, and shouted to his horses. Again the sound of the crunching hoofs, of the shouting, and of the bells took the place of the howling wind, which became particularly audible whenever we stopped.

For about fifteen minutes after the transfer I did not sleep, finding diversion in watching the form of my new driver and of his horses. Ignáshka sat on the box in a dashing fashion, kept leaping up, waved his hand, with the whip hanging down from it, at the horses, shouted, beat one foot against the other, and, bending over, adjusted the crupper of the centre horse, which kept sliding off to the right. He was not tall, but, as I thought, well formed.

Above his short fur coat he wore a beltless cloak, the collar of which was almost thrown back; his neck was entirely bare; he wore not felt, but leather boots and a small cap, which he kept taking off and fixing on his head. His ears were covered by his hair only. In all his movements there was to be seen not only energy, but something more, I thought, namely, a desire to rouse this energy in himself. Still, the farther we travelled, the more frequently he, to adjust himself, jumped up in his seat, clapped his feet together, and started conversations with Aléshka and me. I thought he was afraid of losing courage.

And there was good reason for it: although the horses were good, the road became more difficult with every step, and we could see the horses running less willingly. It became necessary to use the whip, and the good, large, shaggy centre horse stumbled two or three times, even though, taking fright, it jerked forward and swung its shaggy head almost as high as the bell. The right side horse, which I involuntarily watched, visibly dropped the traces and the long leather tassel of the crupper which kept dangling and bobbing on the off side, and begged for the whip, but, being a good, and even a mettled, horse, it seemed to be annoyed at its own weakness, and angrily lowered and raised its head, begging for the reins.

It was really terrible to see the snow-storm and frost growing stronger, the horses weakening, the road getting worse, and ourselves not knowing where we were, or whither we were going, or whether we should reach the station at all, or even a shelter, — and it was ridiculous and strange to hear the bell tinkling with such freedom and cheerfulness, and Ignáshka shouting so briskly and beautifully, as though it were a sunny day during the Epiphany frosts, and we were out for a holiday sleigh-ride along a village street; but, strangest of all, was the thought that we were travelling, and travelling fast, some-

where away from the spot in which we were. Ignáshka started a song, in a horrible falsetto, it is true, but in such a loud voice and with such pauses, during which he whistled, that it would have been strange to be timid while listening to him.

"Ho, there! Don't yell that way, Ignáshka!" was heard the counsellor's voice. "Stop a bit!"

"What?"

"Sto-o-op!"

Ignáshka stopped. Again everything was silent, and the wind began to moan and howl, and the snow, whirling, fell more heavily upon the sleigh. The counsellor walked over to us.

"Well, what?"

"What? Where are we going?"

"Who knows?"

"Are your feet frozen that you strike them so?"

"I hardly feel them."

"You had better get down: there is something glimmering there, — maybe it is a Calmuck camp. You might be able to warm your feet."

"All right. Hold the horses — here!"

Ignáshka ran in the direction pointed out to him.

"One must look at everything and watch it: something might be found. What sense is there in travelling at random?" the counsellor said to me. "Just see how he has made the horses sweat!"

All the time that Ignáshka was walking, — and that lasted so long that I was afraid he might have lost his way, — the counsellor told me in a self-confident, quiet tone of voice what was to be done during a snow-storm, — that it would be best to unhitch a horse and let it go, that, as God is holy, it would take them right, and how sometimes it is possible to go by the stars, and that, if he had the leading sleigh, we should long ago have been at the station.

"Well, did you find it?" he asked Ignáshka, who was coming back, with difficulty trailing his legs knee-deep in the snow.

"I did find something, — some kind of a camp," Ignáshka replied, breathing heavily, "but I do not know what it is. My friend, we must have strayed into the Prolgóvskaya estate. We must bear more to the left."

"What nonsense! That is our camp, which is back of the Cossack village," retorted the counsellor.

"But I tell you it is not!"

"I have looked at it, and I know: that's what it is; and if not that, it is Tamýshevsko. We must keep more to the right: we shall come out near the long bridge, at the eighth verst."

"I tell you no! I saw it!" Ignáshka replied, in anger.

"O friend, and you call yourself a driver!"

"That's it, I am a driver! Go down yourself!"

"What is the use of my going? I know without going."

Ignáshka grew apparently angry: he jumped on the box, without answering him, and drove on.

"I declare, my feet are numb: I can't warm them up," he said to Aléshka, continuing ever more frequently to strike his legs together and to scoop out and throw away the snow which had got into his boot-legs.

I was dreadfully sleepy.

VIII.

"Is it possible I am freezing to death?" I thought through my sleep. "They say death always begins with sleep. It would be better to drown than freeze stiff. Let them drag me out with a seine. Still, it does not make much difference whether I drown or freeze stiff, so long as that stick will not be pushing me in the back and I can forget myself."

I forgot myself for a second.

"What will all this end in?" I suddenly say mentally, opening my eyes for a moment and staring at the white space. "What will it all end in? If we do not find any stacks and the horses stop, which, it seems, will soon happen, we shall all of us freeze to death."

I must confess, although I was a little afraid, the desire that something unusual, something tragical, might happen with us, was stronger in me than my petty fear. It seemed to me that it would not be bad if the horses themselves brought us on the morning half-frozen to some distant, unknown village, and if a few of us were even completely frozen. Dreams of this kind hovered before me with unusual distinctness, and followed each other with extraordinary rapidity.

The horses stop; there is ever more snow falling, and nothing but the ears and the arch of the horses can be seen. Suddenly Ignáshka appears above us with his tróyka and hurries past us. We implore him, we cry to him, to take us; but the wind carries away the sound, and there is no voice. Ignáshka laughs, shouts to his

horses, whistles, and is hidden from us in a deep, snow-drifted ravine. The old man jumps on horseback, swings his elbows, and wants to gallop away, but cannot move from the spot. My old driver, with the large cap, throws himself upon him, drags him down to the ground, and tramples upon him in the snow. "You wizard!" he cries, "you scold! Let us wander together!" But the old man knocks a hole through the drift with his head: he is not so much an old man as a rabbit, and he is leaping away from us.

The counsellor, who is Fédor Filíppych, tells us all to sit down in a circle and not to mind being covered up by the snow, for we will be warmer that way. And really, we are warm and comfortable; only, I want to drink.

I take out the lunch-basket, treat everybody to rum and sugar, and myself drink with great pleasure.

The story-teller is telling some tale about the rainbow, — and above us there is a ceiling of snow and a rainbow.

"Now let us each make a room out of the snow, and let us go to sleep!" I say. The snow is soft and warm, like fur. I make a room for myself and want to enter it; but Fédor Filíppych, who sees the money in my lunch-basket, says to me:

"Hold on! Give me the money! We shall have to die anyway!" and he grabs me by the leg. I give him the money and only ask him to leave me alone; but they do not believe that this is all the money I have, and want to kill me.

I seize the old man's hand and with unspeakable joy begin to kiss it: the old man's hand is tender and sweet. At first he tears it away from me, then he gives it to me of his own accord, and with his other hand pats me.

Still, Fédor Filíppych comes to me and threatens me. I run into my room: it is not a room, but a long, white corridor, and somebody holds me by my legs. I tear myself away.

My dress and part of my skin remain in the hands of him who is holding me; but I am only cold and ashamed, — the more ashamed because my aunt with her parasol and homœopathic medicine-chest, linking arms with the drowned man, are coming toward me. They are laughing, and do not understand the signs which I am making to them.

I throw myself into the sleigh, and my feet trail in the snow; but the old man is in pursuit of me, swinging his arms. The old man is very close to me, but I listen and I hear two bells ringing in front of me, and I know that I am saved as soon as I reach them.

The bells sound louder and louder; but the old man has caught up with me and falls upon my face with his belly, so that the bells can scarcely be heard. I again grasp his hand and begin to kiss it — The old man is not an old man, but the drowned person — and he cries:

"Ignáshka, stop! Those are Akhmét's stacks, I think! Go and take a look at them!"

"This is too terrible. No, I will wake up — "

I opened my eyes. The wind had blown the flap of Aléshka's overcoat on my face, and my knee was uncovered; we were travelling over the bare crust, and the thirds of the bells could be heard most distinctly with the quivering fifth.

I looked to see the stacks; but instead of the stacks, I now see, with open eyes, a house with a balcony and the crenelated wall of a fortress. I am not much interested in scrutinizing this house and fortress; what I want is to see the white corridor, over which I run, and to hear the sound of the church-bell, and to kiss the hand of the old man. I again close my eyes and fall asleep.

IX.

I SLEPT soundly; but the third of the bells was all the time audible and now appeared to me in the shape of a dog, barking and jumping at me, and now as an organ, of which I was one pipe, and now as French verses, which I was composing. Then again it appeared to me that this third was some instrument of torture, with which they did not cease compressing my right heel. This sensation was so strong that I awoke and opened my eyes and rubbed my leg. It was beginning to be numb.

It was a light, turbid, white night. The same motion pushed me and the sleigh; the same Ignáshka was sitting sidewise and beating his feet together; the same side horse, stretching its neck and indolently lifting its feet, ran at a trot over the deep snow, while the tassel bobbed up and down on the crupper and switched the horse's belly. The head of the centre horse with the floating mane shook its head in even measure, straining and loosening the reins which were attached to the arch.

All that was covered with snow more than ever before. The snow whirled in front; from the side it covered the runners and the feet of the horses up to their knees, and lodged from above on the collars and caps. The wind was now on the right, now on the left; it played with the collar and skirt of Ignáshka's cloak and with the mane of the off horse, and moaned over the arch and between the shafts.

It became dreadfully cold, and the moment I put my face out of my collar, the frosty, crisp snow, whirling,

packed itself on my eyelashes, mouth, and nose, and lodged behind my neck. I looked around me, and everything was white, bright, and snowy, — not a thing anywhere but turbid light and snow. I began in earnest to feel terribly. Aléshka was sleeping at my feet and in the very bottom of the sleigh; his whole back was covered with a dense layer of snow. Ignáshka did not lose courage: he kept jerking his reins, shouting, and clapping his feet. The bell sounded just as charmingly. The horses snorted a little, but continued to run, stumbling ever more frequently, and stepping more softly.

Ignáshka again léaped up, waved his mitten, and started a song in his thin, strained voice. Before finishing it, he stopped the sleigh, threw the reins on the seat, and climbed down. The wind howled furiously; the snow covered the skirts of his fur coat, as though shovelled upon it. I looked around: the third sleigh was not back of us, it had fallen behind somewhere. Near the second sleigh the old man could be discerned through the snow mist, jumping now on one foot, now on the other. Ignáshka made about three steps from the sleigh, sat down in the snow, ungirded himself, and began to take off his boots.

"What are you doing there?" I asked.

"I must change my boots, else I shall freeze off my feet," he replied, continuing at his work.

I was too cold to put my neck out of my collar, in order to see what he was doing. I sat upright, looking at the side horse, which, spreading its feet, in a sickly and tired manner wagged its tied-up and snow-covered tail. The jar which Ignáshka caused to the sleigh, as he jumped upon his box, woke me up.

"Where are we now?" I asked. "Shall we get there at least at daybreak?"

"Don't worry: we shall get you there," he replied. "My feet are now quite warm since I have changed my boots."

He started; the bell began to ring, the sleigh once more swayed from side to side, and the wind whistled under the runners. We again navigated the immeasurable sea of snow.

X.

I FELL soundly asleep. When Aléshka, kicking me with his foot, woke me up, and I opened my eyes, it was day. It seemed even colder than at night. There was no snow from above; but a stiff, dry wind kept drifting the powdery snow on the field and especially under the hoofs of the horses and under the runners. The sky in the east, to the right of us, was of a dark blue hue and looked leaden; but the bright, orange, slanting rays were ever more clearly defined upon it. Overhead, the pale azure of the heaven could be seen back of white, fleeting, lightly tinged clouds; on the left the clouds were bright, light, and movable. All about us, so far as the eye could see, the field was covered by white, deep snow, scattered in sharp layers.

Here and there could be seen a grayish mound, over which stubbornly swept crisp, powdery snow. Not one track, of sleigh, or man, or beast, was visible. The contour and colours of the driver's back and of the horses could be clearly discerned and were sharply defined on the white background. The visor of Ignáshka's dark blue cap, his collar, his hair, and even his boots were white. The sleigh was completely covered with snow. The gray centre horse had the whole right side of its head and of the top-lock packed with snow; the off horse on my side had its legs covered with snow up to the knee, and on the right side the large sweat-drops were frozen into a rough surface. The tassel bobbed up in the same even manner, as though to keep time with any imaginable tune,

and the horse was running as before; but by its sunken, rising and falling belly and flabby ears one could see how tired it was.

There was but one new object to arrest attention: it was a verst-post, from which the snow dropped upon the ground, and near which the wind had drifted a whole mound to the right and was still furiously transferring the crisp snow from one side to another. I was very much astonished to see that we had travelled a whole night for twelve hours with the same horses, without knowing whither we were going or stopping, and yet had managed to come out all right. Our bell seemed to tinkle more cheerfully. Ignáshka wrapped himself in his coat and shouted. Behind us the horses snorted, and the bells tinkled on the sleigh of the old man and the counsellor; but the one who had been asleep was positively lost somewhere in the steppe. Having travelled about half a verst, we came across a fresh, not yet covered-up track of a sleigh and tróyka, and occasionally rose-coloured spots of blood, apparently from a horse that had grazed its foot, were seen upon it.

"That is Filípp! I declare, he has got ahead of us!" said Ignáshka.

Now a little house with a sign was seen standing all alone in the snow, which had drifted almost up to the roof and windows. Near the inn stood a tróyka of gray horses, with a curly nap from the frozen sweat, with outstretched legs and drooping heads. The space before the door was swept clean, and there stood a shovel; but the snow still drifted from the roof, and the moaning wind whirled it about.

In reply to the sound of our bells, a tall, red-cheeked, red-haired driver came out of the door, holding a glass of liquor in his hands, and shouted something. Ignáshka turned around to me and asked my permission to stop. Then, for the first time, I saw his physiognomy.

XI.

His face was swarthy and lean, and he had a straight nose, just such as I had expected, judging from his hair and build. It was a round, merry, very snub-nosed physiognomy, with an immense mouth, and sparkling, light blue eyes. His cheeks and neck were red, as if rubbed with a piece of cloth; the eyebrows, the long eyelashes, and the down which evenly covered the lower part of his face, were packed with snow and entirely white. There was but half a verst left to the station, and we stopped.

"Only hurry up!" I said.

"Just one minute," replied Ignáshka, jumping down from his box, and walking over to Filípp.

"Let me have it, friend," he said, taking off the mitten from his right hand and throwing it with the whip on the snow. He threw back his head, and in one gulp emptied the glass of brandy which had been given to him.

The innkeeper, no doubt an ex-Cossack, came out of the door with a bottle in his hand.

"Who wants some?" he said.

Tall Vasíli, a lank, light-haired man, with a goat-like beard, and the counsellor, a stout, white-haired man, with a thick white beard encasing his red face, went up to him and also drank a glass. The old man, too, walked over to the group of the drinking men, but he was not served; he went back to his horses, which were tied from behind, and began to pat one of them on the back and crupper.

The old man was just as I had imagined him: small, haggard, with a wrinkled, livid face, scanty beard, sharp little nose, and ground-down yellow teeth. He wore a new driver's cap, but his short fur coat, worn off, smeared with tar, and torn at the shoulder and the skirts, did not cover his knees and his hempen nether garment, which was tucked into his huge felt boots. He was all bent and wrinkled, and, with trembling face and knees, was busy about the sleigh, apparently trying to get warm.

"Well, Mítrich, you had better take half a bottle! It would warm you up," the counsellor said to him.

Mítrich was startled. He adjusted the harness of his horse, straightened out the arch, and walked over to me.

"Well, sir," he said, taking his cap from off his gray hair, and making a low obeisance, "we have been wandering about with you the whole night, looking for the road: you might favour me with a half-bottle. Really, sir, your Serenity! I have nothing to warm myself with," he added, with a servile smile.

I gave him twenty-five kopeks. The innkeeper brought out a half-bottle and gave it to the old man. He took off his mitten and the whip, and stretched out his small, black, pockmarked, and somewhat livid hand toward the glass; but the thumb refused to obey him, as though it did not belong to him: he could not hold the glass, and he spilled the brandy and dropped the glass on the snow.

All the drivers roared with laughter.

"I declare, Mítrich is so frozen that he cannot hold the brandy."

Mítrich was very much annoyed at having spilled the drink.

However, they filled another glass for him and poured it into his mouth. He immediately became more cheerful, ran into the inn, lighted his pipe, began to grin, displaying his yellow, ground teeth, and to swear with every

word he spoke. Having finished the last glass, the drivers went back to their sleighs, and we started.

The snow grew whiter and brighter, so that one felt blinded looking at it. The orange strips rose higher and higher, and shone brighter and brighter above on the sky; even the red disk of the sun became visible near the horizon through the steel gray clouds: the azure became more brilliant and darker.

On the road, near the village, the track was clear and distinct and of a yellowish consistency, and here and there we crossed over sink-holes; in the frosty, compressed air one could feel a certain agreeable lightness and coolness.

My sleigh went very fast. The head of the centre horse and its neck, with its mane fluttering up to the arch, swayed with a rapid motion, almost in one spot, under the fancier's bell, the tongue of which no longer rang out, but rattled along the walls. The good side horses, tugging together at the frozen, crooked traces, leaped energetically, while the tassel bobbed against the belly and the crupper. Occasionally a side horse wandered off the beaten road into a snowdrift, sending up a spray of snow into its eyes, in its attempt to get out again. Ignáshka shouted in a merry tenor; the dry frost made the runners shriek; behind us two little bells were tinkling in a melodious and holiday fashion, and I could hear the drunken exclamations of the drivers. I looked back: the gray, curly side horses, stretching out their necks and breathing evenly, their bits awry, leaped over the snow. Filípp adjusted his cap, waving the whip; the old man lay in the middle of the sleigh, his legs being raised as before.

Two minutes later the sleigh creaked over the planks of the swept driveway of the station, and Ignáshka turned to me his snow-covered, frost-exhaling, merry face.

"We have brought you here after all, sir!" he said.

MEMOIRS OF A MARKER

1856

MEMOIRS OF A MARKER

It was about three o'clock. The following gentlemen were playing: the big guest (that's the way our people called him), the prince (the one that travels with him all the time), and then the whiskered gentleman, the little hussar, Olíver, the one that was an actor, and the *Pan.*[1] There was a good crowd of people.

The big guest was playing with the prince. I was just walking all around the table, with the rest in my hand, and counting: ten and forty-eight, twelve and forty-eight. You know what it is to be a marker: I had not had a bite in my mouth, and had not slept for two nights, still I had to keep calling out and taking out the balls. As I was counting, I looked around, and saw a new gentleman had come in through the door: he just looked, and looked, and then sat down on a sofa. All right.

"I wonder who he may be? What kind of a fellow, I mean?" was what I thought to myself.

He was neatly dressed, so neatly, as though the garments had just come from the tailor: checkered tricot trousers, fashionable coat, short plush waistcoat, and gold chain, with all kinds of things hanging down from it.

He was neatly dressed, and he himself looked neater still: he was slender, tall, hair curled toward the front,

[1] Polish and Little-Russian word, meaning "gentleman."

latest fashion, and his face white, with ruddy cheeks, — well, in short, a fine fellow.

Of course, in our business, we see a lot of people: big bugs, and all kinds of trash; and so, though you are a marker, you learn to size up people, that is, in case you have some gumption in politics.

I looked at the gentleman, and I saw that he was sitting quietly and was not acquainted with any one, and his dress was the pink of perfection. So I thought to myself: "He is either a foreigner, one of those Englishmen, or some transient count. Though he looks young, he is a somebody." Olíver was sitting near him, and he even shied from him.

The game was finished; the big one had lost, and he shouted to me:

"You," says he, "are lying. You are not counting right, — you are looking sidewise all the time."

He cursed, flung down the cue, and went away. Curse them! He is in the habit of playing a fifty-rouble game with the prince, and here he has lost a bottle of Macon, and is out of sorts. Such is his character. Many a time he plays with the prince until two o'clock at night; they don't put any money into the pocket, and I know that neither the one nor the other has any, and that they are only putting on.

"From twenty-five a corner," says he, "is it a go?"

"It is!"

Let me just yawn, or not put a ball right, — a man is not made of stone! — then I catch it.

"We are not playing for chips, but for money!"

This one gets after me worse than anybody else.

Well, all right. After the big one left, the prince turned to the new gentleman:

"Wouldn't you like to have a game with me?"

"With pleasure," says he.

While he was sitting he looked a regular doll, and

such an important man; but the moment he got up and walked over to the table, he lost his courage, — not exactly lost his courage, but evidently he was not in spirits. Either he did not feel comfortable in his new clothes, or he was afraid because they were all looking on, — only there was not that go to him. He was walking somehow sidewise, and catching his trousers in the table pockets, and if he began to chalk the cue, he dropped the chalk. If he did make a ball, he kept looking around and blushing. Not so the prince: he was used to it. He chalked the cue and his hand, rolled up his sleeve, and smashed the balls into the pockets, small though he was.

They played two or three games, — I do not remember which, — when the prince put down the cue and said:

"Permit me to ask your name."

"Nekhlyúdov," says he.

"Your father," says he, "commanded a corps?"

"Yes," says he.

Then they began talking in French, and I could not understand them. I suppose they went over their families.

"*Au revoir*," said the prince. "I am very glad to have made your acquaintance."

He washed his hands and went to get something to eat, while the other remained at the table with the cue, pushing the balls.

Of course, it is our business to be as rude to a new man as possible, so I began to pile up the balls. He blushed and said:

"May I play some more?"

"Of course," says I; "that is what a billiard-table is for."

At the same time I paid no attention to him, but put away the cues.

"Do you want to play with me?"

"Of course, sir," says I.

He put down the balls.

"Shall it be a crawl?"

"What is a crawl?" says he.

"It's like this," says I, "you pay me half a rouble, and I crawl under the table."

Of course, not having seen such a thing, it seemed strange to him, and he laughed.

"All right," says he.

"Very well." So I say: "How much will you give me?"

"Do you play worse than I?" says he.

"Naturally," says I, "there are few players here who can take it up with you."

We began to play. He really thought he was a great one: he banged the balls dreadfully. The Pan sat there and kept repeating all the time:

"Now that is a ball! That is a hit!"

But what was it? It is true he hit the balls, but there was no calculation in them. As is proper, I lost the first game; I crawled under the table, groaning. Then Olíver and the Pan jumped up from their places and struck the floor with the cues.

"Fine! More!" they cried. "More!"

They were crying "More!" but the Pan would for half a rouble not only crawl under the table but under the Blue Bridge as well. He kept shouting:

"Fine! But you have not yet wiped up all the dust!"

I am Petrúshka the marker, and, I think, everybody knows me. There was Tyúrik, and now it is Petrúshka the marker.

Of course I did not show my game: I lost another.

"I," says I, "cannot play with you, sir."

He laughed. Later, when I had won three games,—and he had forty-nine and I nothing,—I put the cue down on the table and said:

"Sir, shall you go the whole?"

"What do you mean?" says he.

"Either you owe me three roubles, or nothing."

"What," says he, "am I playing with you for money? Fool!"

He even blushed.

Very well. He lost the game.

"Enough," says he.

He drew out his pocketbook, — it was such a new one, bought in an English shop; he opened it, and I saw he wanted to show off. It was chockful of money, — nothing but hundred-rouble bills.

"I have no small change here."

He fetched three roubles out of his purse.

"Here are two roubles for the games, and the rest is for you, to buy drinks with."

I thanked him most humbly. I saw he was a fine gentleman! It would not hurt to crawl under the table for such a one. The pity was he would not play for money; if he did, I should have managed to pull twenty or forty roubles out of him.

When the Pan saw the money which the young gentleman had, "Should you not like to play a game with me?" says he. "You play so nicely." He approached him like a fox.

"No," says he, "excuse me; I have no time." And he went away.

I do not know who he really was, I mean the Pan. Somebody called him Pan, and that name has remained with him ever since. He used to sit day in and day out in the billiard-room, looking on. He was not invited to any game; but he sat there, smoking a pipe which he carried with him. He played a clean game.

All right. Nekhlyúdov came a second time, and a third time; he began to come often. He would arrive in the morning and in the evening. The English game, pool, fifteen-ball game, — he learned everything. He grew

bolder, became acquainted with everybody, and began to play a decent game. Of course, he was a young man, of a great family, with money, — and so everybody respected him. But he once had a quarrel with the big guest.

The whole thing started from mere trifles.

They were playing pool: the prince, the big guest, Nekhlyúdov, Olíver, and somebody else. Nekhlyúdov was standing near the stove and speaking with some one, and it was the big one's turn to play. It so happened that his ball was exactly opposite the stove; it was a tight place, and he liked to play with a swinging stroke.

Either he did not see Nekhlyúdov, or, maybe, he did it on purpose, only as he swung back to strike his ball, he gave Nekhlyúdov an awful whack in the chest with the butt. The poor fellow just groaned. Well? He was so rude, — he did not even excuse himself. He went on playing and did not even look at him; and he grumbled:

"What business has one to stand there? I lost a ball through it. There is plenty of room elsewhere."

The other went up to him, and he was so pale, and he said to him politely, as though nothing had happened:

"You ought to ask my pardon first, sir. You have pushed me," says he.

"I do not feel like asking any pardon now. I ought to have won," says he, "and now," says he, "somebody else will make my ball."

So he again says to him:

"You must ask my pardon!"

"Get away," says he. "Don't bother me!"

And he kept looking at his ball.

Nekhlyúdov went up closer to him, and took him by the arm.

"You are a boor, dear sir," says he.

Though he was slender and young, like a fair maiden, there was fight in him: his eyes burned, as though he

wanted to eat him up. The big guest was a tall, strong man, and no match for Nekhlyúdov.

"What?" says he, "I am a boor?"

He just shouted at him and raised his hand on him. Then all that were there seized their arms, and they were pulled away from each other.

They palavered, and then Nekhlyúdov said:

"He must give me satisfaction, — he has insulted me."

"I do not want to hear anything about satisfaction, — he is a mere boy, and nothing more. I will pull his ears for him."

"If you do not wish to give me satisfaction," says he, "you are not a gentleman."

And he almost burst out weeping.

"You," says he, "are an urchin, and you can't insult me."

Well, they were taken apart, to different rooms, as is always done under the circumstances. Nekhlyúdov and the prince were friends. "Go," says he, "for the Lord's sake, and persuade him — "

The prince went. The big one said:

"I," says he, "am not afraid of anything. I will have no explanations with an urchin. I won't, and that is the end of it."

Well, they spoke and spoke, and stopped; but the big guest quit coming to our place.

What a rooster he was in respect to this matter, — how ambitious — I mean Nekhlyúdov; but he did not have much gumption in anything else. I remember once:

"Whom have you here?" the prince said to Nekhlyúdov.

"Nobody," says he.

"How," says he, "nobody?"

"Why should there be?" says he.

"Why should there be?"

"I," says he, "have lived so until now, so why can't I keep it up?"

"You did live so? Impossible!"

And he roared with laughter, and the whiskered gentleman roared, too. They just made fun of him.

"You mean to say, never?" they said.

"Never!"

They almost died with laughter. I immediately saw that they were making fun of him, and so I watched to see what would happen.

"Let us go there at once," said the prince.

"No, for nothing in the world," says he.

"Nonsense! It is too ridiculous," says he. "Come!"

They drove away.

They came back about one o'clock. They sat down to supper. There were a lot of them, — the very finest gentlemen: Atánov, Prince Rázin, Count Shustákh, Mírtsov. And they all congratulated Nekhlyúdov and laughed. They called me in, and I saw that they were very jolly.

"Congratulate the gentleman," they said.

"On what?" says I.

What was it he said? I do not remember whether he said imitation or initiation.

"I have the honour," says I, "to congratulate you."

He sat there, blushing and smiling. How they did laugh!

All right. Then they came to the billiard-room, and they were all so jolly; he walked over to the billiard-table, leaned over it, and said:

"You," says he, "find it funny, but I am sad. Why," says he, "did I do it? I shall never in my life forgive you, prince," says he.

And he just burst out into tears. Of course, he did not know himself what he was saying. The prince walked over to him, smiling.

"Nonsense! That will do! Come, let us go home, Anatóli!"

"I sha'n't go anywhere," says he. "Why did I do it?" And he wept more than ever. He would not leave the table. That's what comes of a young man not being used to it —

And so he used to come often to our establishment. He once came with the prince and the whiskered gentleman who always went with the prince. The gentlemen called him Fedótka. He had such high cheek-bones, and he was so homely, but he was neatly dressed and travelled in a coach. I really can't make out why they liked him so much. "Fedótka here, Fedótka there," and they gave him to eat and drink, and paid his bills. He was such a cheat: if he lost, he did not pay, but if he won, look out! He had everything of the best — and he walked with the prince, linking arms with him.

"You," says he, "are lost without me. I am Fedót," says he, "like the rest I am not."

What a jester! Very well. They arrived. They said:

"Let us three have a pool!"

"All right," says he.

They began to play at three-rouble stakes. Nekhlyúdov and the prince were talking together.

"You just see," says he, "what a pretty foot she has. No," says he, "not her foot, her braid is beautiful."

Of course, they paid no attention to the game, for they were talking together all the time. Fedótka kept his head level and rolled them off nicely, while they either missed or made fouls. He pocketed six roubles from each. He and the prince had God knows what kind of count between them, for they never paid each other, but Nekhlyúdov drew out two green bills and handed them to him. "No," says he, "I will not take the money from you. Let us play a straight game: *qui tout double*, that is, either double or nothing."

I placed the balls. Fedótka got the lead, and they began to play. Nekhlyúdov scattered the balls, just to show off. At times he would hesitate at the game. "No," says he, "it is too easy." But Fedótka did not forget his advantage, and just waited for a chance. Of course, he did not at first show his game, and won a game as though by chance.

"Let us play for the whole," says he.

"All right."

He won again.

"It began with a trifle," says he. "I do not want to win so much from you. Does it go for the whole?"

"It goes."

Whatever it was, fifty roubles was quite a sum and so Nekhlyúdov began to ask, "Let us play for the whole." And so it went, further and further, growing larger and larger, until he had made 280 roubles on him. Fedótka knew what to do: he always lost a straight game, and won a double. The prince sat and looked on, and when he saw that it was getting serious, he said:

"*Assez!*"

Not a bit of it! They kept increasing the stakes.

Finally it went so far that Nekhlyúdov owed him more than five hundred roubles. Fedótka put down the cue and said:

"Haven't you enough? I am tired."

In reality he was ready to play until daybreak, provided there was money in it: of course, it was all calculation with him. The other wanted now to play worse than ever: "Let us have one more!"

"No, upon my word, I am tired. Come," says he, "up-stairs; there you may have your revenge."

Up-stairs the gentlemen played cards.

Ever since Fedótka did him up, he began to come every day to our establishment. He would play a game or two, and then he would go up-stairs.

God knows what went on up-stairs, only he became a different man; but everything went right with Fedótka.

Formerly he used to come fashionably dressed, clean, his beard and hair nicely trimmed, but now he looked right only in the morning; when he came back from up-stairs it was hard to recognize him.

Once he came down that way with the prince, and he was pale, and his lips quivered, and he spoke excitedly.

"I will not permit him," says he, "to tell me (what did he call it) that I am not *civil*, or some such word, and that he will not play with me. I," says he, "have paid out five thousand to him, and so he might have been more careful before others."

"Come now," says the prince, "is it worth while to be angry with Fedótka?"

"No," says he, "I will not leave it so."

"Stop!" says he. "How can you so lower yourself as to have an affair with Fedótka?"

"But there were strangers present."

"What of it if there were?" says he. "If you want me to I will make him ask your forgiveness this very minute."

"No," says he.

Then they muttered something in French, and I could not understand them. Well? That very evening he again ate supper with Fedótka, and the old friendship was renewed.

All right. Once he came all alone.

"Well," says he, "do I play well?"

Of course, it is our business to please everybody, so I said: "Very well!" But it was not well at all; he just knocked the balls at random, without any calculation. From the time he had taken up with Fedótka, he began to play for money. Before, he would not play for the supper or for the champagne. The prince would say:

"Let us play for a bottle of champagne!"

"No," says he, "I will order a bottle brought anyway. Ho there, bring us a bottle!"

But now he played only for money. He came every day to our place; either he played billiards with some one or he went up-stairs. So I began to think, Why should others profit by him, and not I?

"Well, sir," I said to him, "you have not played with me for quite awhile."

So we began to play.

When I had won about ten half-roubles of him, I said:

"Would you like, sir, to play for the whole?"

He was silent. He did not call me fool as the time before. And so we began to play, all the time for the whole amount, until I won about eighty roubles of him. Well? He began to play with me every day. He would just wait for no one to be present, for before strangers he was, naturally, ashamed to play with the marker. Once he became quite excited, and he owed me about sixty roubles.

"Do you want," says he, "to play for the whole?"

"It goes," says I

I won.

"Hundred and twenty against hundred and twenty?"

"It goes," says I.

I won once more.

"Two hundred and forty against two hundred and forty?"

"Is it not a little too much?" says I.

He was silent. We began to play; again my game.

"Four hundred and eighty against four hundred and eighty?"

I said:

"I do not wish to take advantage of you, sir. Let it be one hundred roubles, or else leave it as it is."

How he yelled out at me! Otherwise he was such a meek man.

"Play, or don't play!"

I saw there was nothing to do.

"Three hundred and eighty," says I, "if you please."

Of course, I lost on purpose.

I gave him forty points. He had fifty-two, and I thirty-six. He let himself loose on the yellow ball and made eighteen points. Mine was on the roll.

I hit the ball so that it should jump out; but no, it turned out a double. Again it was my game.

"Listen," says he, "Peter" (he did not call me Petrúshka), "I cannot pay you the whole now; but in two months I could pay you three thousand if it were necessary."

And he himself blushed dreadfully, and his voice trembled.

"All right, sir," says I.

He put away the cue. He walked up and down, and the perspiration just rolled down from him.

"Peter," says he, "let us play for the whole!"

He almost wept as he said this.

I said:

"What use is there in playing, sir!"

"Come, let us play!"

He brought me a cue himself. I took the cue, and so threw all the balls down on the table so that they fell down on the floor, — of course I had to show off. I said to him:

"All right, sir!"

He was in such a hurry that he himself lifted up a ball. I thought to myself: "I won't get the seven hundred roubles, so I might as well lose." I began to make blunders. Well?

"Why," says he, "do you purposely play so badly?"

His own hands were trembling; and when a ball rolled toward a pocket, he opened wide his fingers, screwed up his mouth, and his head and hands stretched out toward the pocket. I said to him:

"You don't help the ball that way, sir."

All right. So he won this game, and I said:

"One hundred and eighty roubles are against you and one hundred and fifty games; but I want to get my supper."

I put up the cue and went out.

I sat down at a small table, near the door, and began to watch him to see that he would do. Well?

He walked and walked, — I suppose he thought nobody saw him, — and kept pulling his hair, — and again he walked, and mumbled, and tore his hair dreadfully!

Then I did not see him for about eight days. He came once to the dining-room, and he looked so gloomy, and did not go to the billiard-room.

The prince noticed him:

"Come, let us have a game!" says he.

"No," says he, "I will not play again."

"Come, now, let us have a game!"

"No," says he, "I will not go. It will do you no good, if I go, but it will make me feel bad."

So he did not come for about ten days. Then, on a holiday, he came in his evening dress, — evidently he had been out calling, — and he remained the whole day; he played all the time; he came back the next and the third day — Everything went as of old. I wanted to play with him again.

"No," says he, "I will not play with you. The one hundred and eighty roubles which I owe you, you will get next month if you call at my house."

Very well. I called in a month.

"Upon my word," says he, "I have no money. Come back on Thursday!"

I came on Thursday, — he had such fine apartments.

"Is the gentleman at home?" says I.

"He is resting," they said.

"All right, I will wait."

He had a valet of his own; he was such a gray-haired old man, — so simple and artless. We began to talk together.

"What," says he, "are we doing here? My master has been squandering all his money, and there is no honour nor advantage for us from this St. Petersburg. As we were coming from the village we thought that we should be calling on princes, counts, and generals, as we used to do when the lady — the kingdom of heaven be hers — was alive; we thought that we should get some regal maiden, with a dowry, and we should live in right lordly fashion. But it turns out that we are only running from one restaurant to another — it's very bad! Princess Rtíshchev is an aunt of ours, and Prince Borotýntsev is our grandfather. Well? He was there only once, at Christmas, and otherwise does not show up there. The people just make fun of me: 'Your master,' they say, 'is not a bit like his father.' So I once said to him:

"'Why, sir, do you not call on your aunt? She is anxious to see you.'

"'It is dull there, Demyánych,' says he.

"It is dreadful — all the pleasure he finds is in restaurants. If he only served, but no, that he won't do. He is doing nothing but playing cards, and so forth; such things never lead to anything good — Oh, we are perishing, perishing for nothing! The defunct lady — the kingdom of heaven be hers — has left us a very fine estate of more than three thousand souls, and there was more than three hundred thousand roubles' worth of timber. He has mortgaged everything, has sold the timber, ruined the estate, and there is nothing left. Without the master the superintendent is naturally more than the master. What does he care? All he wants is to fill his pockets, if everything goes to the dogs. The other day two peasants came to complain in the name of the whole estate.

"'He has completely ruined the estate,' they said.

"Well? He read the complaint, gave the peasants ten roubles each, and said: 'I will soon be there myself. As soon as I get money,' says he, 'I will pay my debts, and then I will go to the country.'

"How can he pay what he owes, when we have been doing nothing but making debts? This one winter which we have been here we have squandered eighty thousand at the very least; now there is not a silver rouble in the house. All this comes from his virtue. He is such a simple master. It is this which ruins him so, ruins him so completely."

The old man almost wept.

He awoke at about eleven o'clock, and he called me in.

"They have not sent me any money," says he, "but it is not my fault. Shut the door," says he.

I shut the door.

"Here," says he, "take my watch or diamond scarf-pin, and pawn it. They will give you more than one hundred and eighty roubles for it, and when I get the money I will redeem it," says he.

"Well, sir, if you have no money, it can't be helped; I will take the watch. I will do it for you."

I saw that the watch was worth at least three hundred roubles.

All right. I pawned the watch for one hundred roubles, and brought him the receipt.

"You will owe me eighty roubles, and you can redeem the watch yourself."

He has been owing me these eighty roubles ever since.

And thus he began to come to our place every day. I do not know what kind of calculations they had, but he always came with the prince, or he went with Fedótka up-stairs to play. The three had some very queer accounts: now this one gave to that one, now that one

to this one, and I could not make out who was owing whom.

He used to come to us for about two years in this manner. But he now looked quite different: he grew bold, and sometimes went so far as to borrow a rouble from me with which to pay the cabman; and he played with the prince at a hundred roubles a game.

He now looked gloomy, lean, and yellow. When he came, he at once asked for a wine-glass of absinthe, a lunch of anchovy sandwiches, and port with them; then he became more cheerful.

Once he came before dinner, during the Butter-week, and began to play with some hussar.

"Do you wish," says he, "to make the game interesting?"

"I don't mind it," says he. "What shall it be?"

"A bottle of Clos-Vougeot, if you wish."

"It goes."

All right. The hussar won the game, and they sat down to eat. When they were at the table, Nekhlyúdov said:

"Simon! A bottle of Clos-Vougeot; be sure and have it well warmed."

Simon went away and brought the dinner, but not the bottle.

"Where is the wine?"

Simon ran away and brought the roast.

"Let us have the wine," says he.

Simon was silent.

"Are you crazy? We are finishing our dinner, and the wine is not yet here. Who would drink wine with the dessert?"

Simon ran away.

"The proprietor," says he, "wants to see you."

He blushed all over, and jumped out from behind the table.

"What is it," says he, "that he wants?"

The proprietor was standing at the door.

"I cannot trust you any more," says he, "if you do not pay me your bill."

"I told you," says he, "that I would pay you about the 1st."

"As you please, but I cannot give you on trust all the time, and receive nothing. As it is I lose," says he, "tens of thousands in debts."

"Don't say that, *mon cher!*" says he. "You may trust me. Send me a bottle, and I will try and pay you as soon as possible."

And he himself ran away.

"Why have they called you out?" says the hussar.

"He asked me a certain thing."

"It would be a fine thing," says the hussar, "to drink a glass of warm wine now."

"Well, Simon?"

My Simon ran away. Again there was no wine, nothing. Pretty bad. He rushed away from the table, and came to me.

"For God's sake, Petrúshka, let me have six roubles!"

He looked beside himself.

"I have no money, upon my word, and, as it is, you owe me a great deal."

"I will give you forty for six," says he, "in a week."

"If I had any I should not dare refuse it to you; but, upon my word, I have no money."

Well? He jumped away, set his teeth, clenched his fists, ran up and down the corridor like one mad, and banged his forehead.

"O Lord," says he, "what is this?"

He did not even go back to the dining-room, but jumped into a carriage, and drove off.

How they laughed at him! The hussar said:

"Where is the gentleman that has been dining with me?"

"He has gone," they said to him.

"How gone? What word did he leave?"

"He did not leave any word. He just sat down in the carriage, and rode off."

"He is a fine goose," says he.

Well, I thought that after such disgrace he would not come back. But no, he came back on the following evening. He went to the billiard-room, and brought with him some kind of a box. He took off his overcoat.

"Let us play," says he.

He scowled and looked angry.

We played a game.

"Enough," says he. "Bring me pen and paper! I want to write a letter."

Without thinking much I brought some paper and put it on the table in the small room.

"It's all ready, sir," says I.

Very well. He sat down at the table. He kept writing and writing, and muttering something all the time. Then he jumped up, with a frown:

"Go and see whether my carriage is there!"

It was on a Friday of Butter-week when there were no guests present: they were all attending balls.

I went to find out about the carriage, but I had barely gone outside the door, when he called:

"Petrúshka! Petrúshka!" as though he were frightened.

I returned. I saw he stood up, as pale as a sheet, and looked at me.

"Have you called me, sir?"

He was silent.

"What do you wish?" says I.

He was silent.

"Oh, yes! Let us play one more game," says he.

Very well. He won the game.

"Well," says he, "have I learned to play a good game?"

"Yes," says I.

"That's it. Go now, and find out about the carriage!"

He himself walked up and down in the room.

Without thinking about anything, I went out on the porch. I saw that there was no carriage there, so I went back.

As I was walking back I heard a sound, as though some one had thumped with the cue. I walked into the billiard-room, and there was a strange odour there.

Lo, there he was lying on the floor, all in blood, and the pistol was thrown away near him. I was so frightened that I could not say a word.

He jerked and jerked his leg, and now stretched himself. Then he seemed to snore and began to spread himself out.

Why this misfortune happened to him, why he took his life, God alone knows. He left that piece of paper, otherwise I can't make it out at all.

Queer things happen in the world!

"God has given me everything which a man can wish: wealth, a name, intelligence, noble striving. I wanted to enjoy myself, and have trampled in the mud everything good that there was in me.

"I am not disgraced, not unhappy, have committed no crime; but I have done something worse: I have killed my feelings, my reason, my youth.

"I am enmeshed in a dirty net, from which I cannot free myself, and to which I cannot become accustomed. I am constantly falling, falling, and I feel my fall and cannot stop.

. . . . . .

"What has ruined me? Did I have any strong passion which might justify me? No.

"I have pleasant recollections!

"One terrible minute of oblivion, which I shall never forget, made me come to my senses. I was horrified when I saw what an immeasurable abyss divided me from what I wished to be and could be. In my imagination arose hopes, dreams, and thoughts of youth.

"Where are those bright thoughts of life, of eternity, of God, which used to fill my soul with such distinctness and force? Where is the objectless power of love which with cheering heat warmed my soul?

. . . . . .

"Oh, how good and happy I might have been, if I had continued on the path which, upon entering life, my fresh mind and childlike, genuine feelings had discovered! More than once did I try to leave the rut in which my life was running, and to get back to this bright path. I said to myself, 'I will employ all the powers which I have,' and I could not. When I was left alone, I felt awkward and strange in regard to myself. When I was with others, I did not hear my inner voice at all, and I fell lower and lower.

"Finally I reached the terrible conviction that I could not rise, stopped thinking of it, and wanted to forget myself; but hopeless repentance agitated me more strongly still. Then I was for the first time assailed by the thought of suicide.

. . . . . .

"I used to think that the proximity of death would elevate my soul. I was mistaken. In fifteen minutes I shall be no more, and my view has not changed. I see, hear, think in the same way; there is the same strange inconsistency, frailness, and frivolity in my thoughts."

TWO HUSSARS

1856

TWO HUSSARS

"Jomini and Jomini
But of brandy not a word."
— D. Davýdov.

In one of the first decades of the nineteenth century, when there were not yet any railways, nor avenues, nor gas, nor stearine candles, nor low spring divans, nor unvarnished furniture, nor disenchanted youths with monocles, nor liberalizing, philosophical women, nor charming *dames-aux-camélias*, of whom there is such a large brood in our day, — in those naïve times, when leaving St. Petersburg for Moscow, in a wagon or carriage, people took with them a whole kitchen of home-made victuals, and travelled for eight days over a soft, or dusty, or muddy road, and believed in Pozhárski cutlets and Valdáy bells and cracknel rings; when, in the long autumn evenings they burned tallow dips to illumine domestic circles consisting of twenty or thirty members, and at balls they put in candelabra wax tapers or spermaceti candles; when furniture was placed symmetrically; when our fathers were young, not only by the absence of wrinkles and gray hair, but were ready to have shooting affrays for women, and to rush forward from the remote corner of the room in order to pick up accidentally or even not accidentally dropped handkerchiefs; while our mothers wore short waists and enormous sleeves, and

decided domestic affairs by the drawing of lottery; when charming *dames-aux-camélias* shunned daylight, — in those naïve days of Masonic lodges, Martinists, Tugendbunds, in the days of Milorádovich, Davýdov, Púshkin, there was a meeting of the landed proprietors in K——, the capital of a government, and the elections of nobility were just coming to an end.

I.

"I DON'T care, even if it be in the parlour," said a young officer, in a fur coat and hussar cap, who had just stepped out of a stage sleigh and was entering the best hotel in K——.

"There is such an enormous meeting, your Serenity," said the hotel servant, who had had time to find out from the orderly that the hussar's name was Count Túrbin, and who, therefore, honoured him with "your Serenity." "Proprietress Afrémov with her daughters has promised to leave in the evening: you will occupy it as soon as it is free, — number eleven," he said, softly stepping through the corridor, in front of the count, and continually looking around.

In the guest-hall, at a small table and near a dulled, full-sized portrait of Emperor Alexander, there sat at some champagne several native gentlemen, so it seemed, and to one side some transient merchants, in blue fur coats.

Walking into the room and calling in Blücher, an immense gray bulldog which had arrived with him, the count threw off his overcoat, from the collar of which the hoarfrost had not yet disappeared, asked for brandy, and, wearing his blue velvet short coat, seated himself at the table and entered into a conversation with the gentlemen who were sitting there; these, at once favourably disposed toward the handsome newcomer with the frank exterior, offered him a glass of champagne. The count at first emptied a small glass of brandy, then himself asked for a

bottle in order to treat the new acquaintances. The driver came in to ask a *pourboire*.

"Sáshka, give him some!" exclaimed the count.

The driver went out with Sáshka and returned, holding the money in his hand.

"Your Excellency, I think I have tried as hard as I could for you! You promised me half a rouble, and he offered me only a quarter!"

"Sáshka, give him a rouble!"

Sáshka looked abashed at the driver's feet.

"It will do for him," he said, in a bass voice, "and, besides, I have no more money."

The count took out of his pocketbook the only two blue bills that were in it, and gave one of these to the driver, who kissed his hand and went out.

"Here I am," said the count, "with my last five roubles."

"In hussar fashion, count," smiling, remarked one of the noblemen, who, to judge from his moustache, his voice, and a certain energetic agility in his legs, was an ex-cavalryman. "Do you intend to stay here long, count?"

"I have to get some money, or else I should not stay here. Besides, they have no rooms — the devil skin them — in this damned dram-shop —"

"Permit me, count," retorted the cavalryman, "to offer you my room? I am here, in number seven. Maybe you will not disdain to stay overnight with me. You had better stay two or three days with us. To-night there is going to be a ball at the marshal's. He would be so glad to see you!"

"Really, count, be our guest," interposed another of the interlocutors, a handsome young man. "What is the use in hurrying off? You know, elections take place but once in three years. You ought to take a look at our young ladies, count!"

"Sáshka, let me have clean underwear: I will go to the

bath-house," said the count, getting up. "From there, maybe, I will actually make for the marshal's."

Then he called up the hotel servant to tell him something, to which the servant, smiling, replied that it was "all the work of human hands," and went out.

"So, my friend, I will order them to take my portmanteau to your room," the count called out beyond the door.

"If you please; you will make me happy," replied the cavalryman, running up to the door. "Number seven, don't forget!"

When his steps died away, the cavalryman returned to his seat and, moving up closer to the official, and looking straight at him with his smiling eyes, said:

"That is that very fellow!"

"Indeed?"

"I tell you he is that same duelling hussar, — well, that same Túrbin. He recognized me, I will wager, he did. Why, he and I caroused together at Lebedyán for three weeks in succession, when I was connected with the remount department. There was a fine trick we once played together. He is a brick, isn't he?"

"He is. How agreeable he is of address! Nothing of the kind could be suspected," replied the handsome young man. "How easily we became acquainted! — How old is he, twenty-five?"

"No, he looks so, but he is older. You ought to know the kind of a fellow he is! Who ravished Miss Migunóv? He. He killed Sáblin; Mátnev he put out of the window by his legs; he won three hundred thousand of Prince Nésterov. I tell you, he is a desperate chap: a gambler, duellist, seducer, but a soulful hussar, — I tell you he is a dear. It's really glorious for us; if people only knew what it means to be a genuine hussar! Ah, what times those were!"

The cavalryman narrated to his companion the Lebedyán carousal with the count, such a one as had never been

nor ever could have been. It could not have been, in th first place, because he had never before seen the coun and because he had left the service two years before th count had entered it, and, in the second, because the cav alryman had really never served in the cavalry, but ha for four years been a most modest yunker in the Byélevsk regiment, and had left the army just as he had beer advanced to the dignity of an ensign. Ten years before he, having received an inheritance, had actually gone to Lebedyán, where he spent seven hundred roubles with the remount officers, and ordered a uhlan uniform with orange facings, as he intended to join the uhlans. His desire to become a cavalryman and the three weeks passed at Lebedyán with the remount officers remained the brightest, happiest period of his life, so that he at first transferred this desire into reality, then into recollection, and finally began firmly to believe himself in his cavalry past, which did not keep him from being a truly worthy man, as regards gentleness and honesty.

"Yes, he who has not served in the cavalry will never be able to understand us fellows." He bestrode the chair and, thrusting forward his lower jaw, began to speak in a bass voice. "I would be riding in front of my squadron; under me a demon, and not a horse, rearing all the time, and I upon it, a demon myself. Up would gallop the commander of the squadron at inspection. 'Lieutenant,' says he, 'please, without you there will be nothing, — lead out the squadron in parade fashion.' Very well, and I would look around and shout at my whiskered fellows — The devil take it, it was a great time!"

The count came back, all red and with wet hair, from the bath-house, and walked at once into number seven, where the cavalryman was sitting, in morning-gown and smoking a pipe, reflecting with delight and a certain measure of fear on the happiness which had fallen to his share, — to live in the same room with famous Túrbin. "Sup-

pose now," it occurred to him, "he will suddenly take and undress me and carry me naked beyond the toll-gate to drop me in the snow, or — he will tar me, or simply — no, he will not do it, as a friend — " he consoled himself.

"Sáshka, feed Blücher!" shouted the count.

Sáshka made his appearance. He had braced himself from the journey with a glass of brandy and was quite intoxicated.

"You could not stand it any longer, and got drunk, you canaille! Feed Blücher!"

"He won't starve as it is! How smooth he is!" replied Sáshka, patting the dog.

"Shut up! Get out and feed him!"

"All you care for is for the dog to be fed; but if a man takes a dram, you berate him."

"Look out, I'll thrash you!" shouted the hussar in such a voice that the window-panes rattled and the cavalryman became a little frightened.

"You ought to ask whether Sáshka has had anything to eat to-day. All right, strike me, if your dog is more to you than a man," Sáshka muttered, and at the same time received such a terrible blow with the fist in his face that he fell down, struck his head against the partition, and, clutching his nose with both his hands, rushed out of the door and fell in a lump on the clothes-chest in the corridor.

"He has smashed my teeth," growled Sáshka, with one hand wiping his bleeding nose, and with the other scratching the back of Blücher, who was licking himself. "He has smashed my teeth, Bluch, but still he is my count, do you understand, Bluch? Do you want to eat?"

Having lain awhile, he got up, fed the dog, and, almost sobered up, went in to attend to his master and offer him tea.

"You will simply offend me," the cavalryman said, timidly, standing in front of the count, who was lying on

his bed, with his feet raised above the partition. "I am myself an old soldier and a comrade, I may say. What is the use of your borrowing from anybody else, as long as I am only too happy to let you have two hundred roubles? I have not the sum just now, but only one hundred; however, I shall get it this very day. You will simply offend me, count!"

"Thanks, friend," said the count, immediately perceiving the kind of relations that ought to be established between them and patting the cavalryman's shoulder, "thanks! If so, let us go to the ball! What are we going to do now? Tell me what you have in town here. Any pretty girls here? Any carousers? Any card-players here?"

The cavalryman explained that there would be a mass of pretty women at the ball; that Kolkóv, the chief of the rural police, lately elected, was the biggest carouser, but that he lacked the true hussar dash, though he was otherwise a good old fellow; that Ilyúshka's gipsy choir, with Stéshka for a starter, had been singing in town since the beginning of the elections, and that in the evening everybody would go to hear them after the ball at the marshal's.

"There is some fine gambling going on, too," he said. "Lúkhnov, a stranger, is playing for money, and Ilín, who occupies number eight, a cornet of uhlans, has been losing a lot. It has begun there already. They are playing every evening, and I tell you, count, Ilín is a fine fellow: he is not in the least stingy, but will give away his last shirt."

"So let us go to him! We shall see what sort of people they are," said the count.

"Let us go, let us go! They will be awfully glad!"

II.

Cornet Ilín had just wakened. On the previous evening he had sat down to the game at eight o'clock, playing fifteen hours straight, up to eleven o'clock. He had lost quite a sum, but how much he did not know, because he had about three thousand of his own and fifteen thousand of Crown money, — which he had long ago mixed up with his own, and was afraid of counting up, in order not to convince himself that his surmise that a certain amount of the Crown money was gone was just. He had fallen asleep at about noon and slept that heavy, dreamless sleep which only very young men sleep after a great loss.

Upon awakening at six o'clock, just at the time when Count Túrbin arrived at the hotel, and seeing cards and chalk all about him on the floor and dusty tables in the middle of the room, he in horror recalled his game of the previous night, and the last jack, which cost him five hundred roubles; but, not quite sure of the facts, he took the money out from under the pillow and began to count it. He recognized several assignats which at "corners" and finals had several times passed from hand to hand, and he recalled the whole progress of the game. His three thousand were gone, and of the Crown money twenty-five hundred were lacking.

The uhlan had been playing four nights straight.

He was travelling from Moscow, where he had received the Crown money. At K—— the station inspector detained him under the pretext of having no horses, but in reality by an agreement, which he had long before made with the

proprietor of the hotel, to hold all strangers back for one day. The uhlan, a youthful, merry lad, who had just received three thousand from his parents in Moscow, with which to fix himself properly in the army, was only too glad to pass several days in K—— during the elections, and hoped to have a glorious time here. He was acquainted with a landed proprietor, a father of a family, and he had intended to call on him, in order to court his daughters, when the cavalryman came to introduce himself to the uhlan, and that very evening, without any evil thought, made him acquainted in the guest-hall with his friend Lúkhnov and other gamesters. That very evening the uhlan sat down to play. He not only did not drive out to see the landed proprietor, but did not even ask for horses, and did not leave the room for four days.

Having dressed himself and drunk tea, he walked over to the window. He wanted to take a walk in order to dispel the persistent memories of the game. He put on his overcoat and went out into the street. The sun had already hid itself behind the white houses with the red roofs; it was evening twilight. The air felt warm. Moist snow fell in large flakes upon the muddy streets. He was suddenly overcome by inexpressible melancholy at the thought that he had slept through a day such as the one which was now ending had been.

"You can never bring back a day that has passed," he thought.

"I have ruined my youth," he suddenly said to himself, not because he actually thought he had ruined his youth, — he was not even thinking of it, — but simply because this phrase had occurred to him.

"What am I going to do now?" he reflected. "Borrow from somebody and get away." A lady passed along the sidewalk. "What a stupid lady," he thought for some reason. "There is nobody to borrow from. I have ruined my youth." He walked past the merchants' row. A

merchant in a fox fur coat was standing at the door and inviting purchasers. "If I had not discarded the eight, I might have won back what I lost." A beggar woman moaned back of him. "There is nobody to borrow from."

A gentleman in a bear fur coat passed by; a sentry stood near his booth. "Can't I do something unusual? Could I not shoot at them? No, it is tiresome! I have ruined my youth. Ah, what fine horse-collars with the trimmings are hanging there! If I just could get into a sleigh! Ah, my dear ones! I will go home. Lúkhnov will come soon, and we shall begin to play."

He returned home, and again counted the money. No, he had not been mistaken the first time: again there was a deficit of twenty-five hundred roubles of the Crown money.

"I will stake twenty-five, then a 'corner'—then seven, then fifteen, then thirty, then sixty—three thousand. I will buy the collars and get away. The rascals will not let me! I have ruined my youth."

That was what was going on in the uhlan's mind when Lúkhnov actually entered in his room.

"Have you been up long, Mikháylo Vasílich?" asked Lúkhnov, leisurely taking off his gold spectacles from his lean nose and carefully wiping them with his red silk handkerchief.

"No, only a moment ago. I slept superbly."

"A hussar has arrived here. He has stopped with Zavalshévski—have you heard?"

"No, I have not. Well, is no one here yet?"

"I think they have gone to Pryákhin's. They will be here before long."

"Indeed, soon there entered an officer of the garrison who always accompanied Lúkhnov; some kind of a Greek merchant with an immense aquiline nose of a cinnamon hue and with sunken black eyes; a stout, puffed-up landowner, the proprietor of a distillery, who

played through the whole night at half-a-rouble stakes. Everybody was anxious for the game to begin at once; but the chief gamesters said nothing about this subject, while Lúkhnov, more particularly, was in the quietest manner possible telling about highwaymen in Moscow.

"You must consider," he said, "that Moscow is the first city of the realm, a capital, — and they walk about at night dressed as devils, and frighten the stupid rabble, and rob strangers, — and that's the end of it. What is the police doing? That's what I should like to know."

The uhlan listened attentively to the story about the highwaymen, but when it was over he got up, and in a soft voice ordered the cards. The stout proprietor was the first one to express his thought.

"Gentlemen, why lose the golden time? Let's to business!"

"Yes, you have taken away a lot with your half-roubles, so you like it," said the Greek.

"That's so, it is time we should," said the officer of the garrison.

Ilín looked at Lúkhnov. Lúkhnov, looking him in the eye, calmly continued his story about the highwaymen dressed as devils, with claws.

"Shall you keep bank?" asked the uhlan.

"Is it not too early yet?"

"Byélov!" exclaimed the uhlan, for some reason with a blush. "Bring me my dinner — I have not had anything to eat, gentlemen — bring champagne and cards!"

Just then the count and Zavalshévski entered the room. It turned out that Túrbin and Ilín were of the same division. They at once became friends, clinked glasses and drank champagne, and five minutes later addressed each other as "thou." It seemed the count took a great liking to Ilín. The count kept smiling, as he looked at him, and making fun of his youth.

"What a brick of a uhlan!" he said. "The whiskers! Look at the whiskers!"

Ilín had just a white down on his lips.

"I see you are getting ready for a game," said the count. "I wish you good luck, Ilín! You, I take it, are a master at it," he added with a smile.

"Yes, we are getting ready for it," replied Lúkhnov, tearing a dozen cards. "And you, count, won't you play?"

"No, not to-day, or else I'll do you all up. When I begin to lay it on, any bank will crack! I have no money. I lost everything in a game at Volochók station. I there fell in with an infantry chap with rings, — no doubt a cheat, — and he has scrubbed me out clean."

"Did you stay long at that station?" asked Ilín.

"Twenty-two hours. That damned station will remain memorable to me! Well, the inspector won't forget it, either."

"How so?"

"I arrived, you know; out jumped the inspector, with the phiz of a thief and highwayman: 'I have no horses,' says he; now it is my rule, I must tell you, that when there are no horses, I do not take off my fur coat, but go at once to the inspector's room, you know, — not the office, but to his private room, — and order at once that all the doors and ventilators be opened, claiming that there is coal-gas in the room. Just so I did there. You will remember what frosts we had last month, — something like twenty degrees. The inspector began to object, and I banged him in his face. Then some kind of an old woman, little girls, and other women raised a howl, grabbed the pots, and began to run to the village — I ran to the door. Says I: 'Give me horses, and I will go away; if not, I will not let you out, and will freeze you all to death!'"

"That's a fine way!" said the puffed-up proprietor,

roaring with laughter. "That's the way they freeze out cockroaches."

"I somehow did not keep a good watch upon them, for the inspector and all the women got away from me. Only an old woman, on the oven, was left as my captive: she did nothing but sneeze all the time, and pray. Then we began to palaver: the inspector came back and, from a distance, begged me to let the old woman go, but I set Blücher on him, — Blücher is great on inspectors. Still the scoundrel did not give me any horses before the following day. In the meantime that infantry chap came. I went into another room, and we began to play. Have you seen Blücher? — Blücher! — Here!"

Blücher ran in. The gamesters took a condescending interest in him, although, apparently, they were anxious to devote themselves to something quite different.

"But, gentlemen, why don't you play? Please don't let me interfere with you. I am a great talker," said Túrbin. "Whether you like it or not, it is a good thing."

III.

LÚKHNOV moved two candles up to him, drew out an immense cinnamon-coloured pocketbook, filled with money, leisurely, as though revealing some mystery, opened it on the table, took out from it two one-hundred-rouble bills, and put them under his cards.

"Then it is like yesterday, — bank at two hundred," he said, adjusting his spectacles and breaking the seal of a pack of cards.

"All right," said Ilín, without looking at him, during the conversation which he was having with Túrbin.

The game was started. Lúkhnov kept bank in a precise manner, like a machine, occasionally stopping and leisurely noting something down, or sternly looking over his glasses and saying, in a weak voice: "Send it over!"

The stout proprietor spoke louder than the rest, making all kinds of loud observations to himself, putting his chubby finger in his mouth every time he wanted to bend a card. The officer of the garrison wrote in a fine hand under the cards, and bent small corners under the table. The Greek was sitting to the right of the banker, and with his sunken black eyes carefully observed the game, as though waiting for something.

Zavalshévski, who was standing at the table, suddenly came into motion, took a red or a blue bill out of his trousers' pocket, placed his card on top of it, slapped it with the palm of his hand, and said: "Fetch it, seven!" He bit his moustache, stood now on one foot, now on the other, blushed, and was all in commotion,

which lasted until the card came out. Ilín ate veal with pickles, which had been placed near him on the divan, and, rapidly wiping his hands on his coat, put down one card after another. Túrbin, who at first was sitting on the divan, immediately saw what the matter was. Lúkhnov did not look at the uhlan at all; only occasionally his eyes for a moment were directed over his glasses upon the hands of the uhlan, but most of his cards lost.

"If I just could beat this card," Lúkhnov muttered about a card of the stout proprietor, who was playing at half a rouble.

"You beat Ilín, and not me," remarked the proprietor.

Indeed, Ilín's cards were beaten more frequently than the rest. He nervously tore the losing card under the table, and with trembling hands selected another. Túrbin arose from the divan and asked the Greek to let him sit down near the banker. The Greek took another seat, and the count, having taken his chair, did not for a moment take his eyes off Lúkhnov's hands.

"Ilín!" he suddenly said in his usual voice, which, quite involuntarily, drowned all the others, "why do you stick to the routières? You do not know how to play."

"It makes no difference how you play."

"This way you will certainly lose. Let me punt for you!"

"No, excuse me: I prefer to do it myself. Play for yourself, if you wish."

"I said I would not play for myself; but I would do it for you. I am annoyed to see you lose."

"That is, apparently, my fate!"

The count grew silent and, leaning on his elbows, again began to look steadily at the banker's hands.

"It is bad!" he suddenly said, in a loud and drawling voice.

Lúkhnov looked at him.

"It is bad, bad!" he said, still louder, looking Lúkhnov straight in the eye.

The game went on.

"It — is — not — good!" again said Túrbin, the moment Lúkhnov beat a big card of Ilín's.

"What is it you do not like, count?" the banker asked, politely and indifferently.

"That you allow Ilín to win the simples, and yourself take the corners. That's what is bad."

Lúkhnov made a slight motion with his eyebrows and his shoulders, which expressed an advice to submit to fate in everything, and continued to play.

"Blücher! Here!" shouted the count, getting up. "Sick him!" he added, swiftly.

Blücher, hitting his back against the divan and almost upsetting the officer of the garrison, leaped out from underneath it, ran up to his master, and growled, looking at everybody and wagging his tail, as though asking: "Who is insulting you, eh?"

Lúkhnov put down his cards and moved his chair away from the table.

"It is impossible to play under these conditions," he said. "I despise dogs. What kind of a game will it be, if we are to have a whole kennel here?"

"Especially these dogs, — I think they are called bloodsuckers," interposed the officer of the garrison.

"Well, are we going to play, or not, Mikháylo Vasílich?" Lúkhnov asked the host.

"Count, please don't bother us!" Ilín turned to Túrbin.

"Come here for a minute," Túrbin said, taking Ilín by the hand, and going with him beyond the partition.

From there could be distinctly heard the words of the count, who was speaking in his habitual voice. His voice was always such that it could be heard three rooms away.

"Have you lost your senses? Do you not see that

that gentleman in the spectacles is a cheat of the first water?"

"Nonsense! Don't say that!"

"Not nonsense, but stop playing, I tell you! It does not make much difference to me. Any other time I would gladly win money from you; but just now I am somehow sorry for you, because you are going to be cleaned out. And, besides, aren't you playing on Crown money?"

"No! What makes you think that?"

"My friend, I have myself run on that path, and I know all the tricks of a cheat. I tell you, the one in the spectacles is a cheat. Stop playing, I beg you. I ask you as a comrade."

"I will just finish this one pack."

"I know how it will be. Well, we shall see."

They returned. In that one pack Ilín placed on many cards, and he lost a big sum on them.

Túrbin put his hand on the centre of the table.

"That will do! Come!"

"No, I cannot. Please leave me alone," Ilín said, in anger, shuffling the bent cards, and not looking at Túrbin.

"Well, the devil be with you! Be sure and lose, if that's what you are after, but I must go. Zavalshévski! Let us go to the marshal's!"

They went out. All were silent, and Lúkhnov did not keep bank until the thud of their steps and of Blücher's claws died away in the corridor.

"What a hothead!" said the proprietor, smiling.

"Well, now he will not bother us," the officer of the garrison added, hurriedly, and in a whisper.

And the game went on.

IV.

THE musicians — the marshal's manorial serfs — were standing in the buffet-room, which had been cleared away for the occasion of the ball, and, rolling up their coat sleeves, at a given signal began to play an old-fashioned Polish "Alexander, Elizabeth;" and, under the bright and soft illumination of wax tapers, there sailed along the large parqueted parlour a governor-general of the reign of Catherine, with a star, linking arms with the haggard marshal's wife, the marshal with the governor's wife, and so forth, — all the governmental powers in all possible combinations and permutations, — when Zavalshévski, in blue dress coat with an immense collar and buffs on his shoulders, in stockings and shoes, exhaling around him the odour of jessamine, with which his moustache, his facings, and his handkerchief were copiously besprinkled, and the handsome hussar, in blue tightly fitting riding-trousers and gold-embroidered red dolman, from which hung the cross of St. Vladímir and a medal of the year 1812, entered the parlour.

The count was not tall, but exquisitely built. His light blue and exceedingly sparkling eyes, and his fairly long, thick-locked, dark blond hair gave a peculiar character to his beauty. The count's arrival at the ball had been expected. The handsome young man, who had seen him in the hotel, had informed the marshal of his coming. The impression produced by this news was various, but, in general, not entirely agreeable. "That lad will put us to shame," was the opinion of the old men and women.

"What if he ravishes me?" was more or less the opinion of the young women and maidens.

The moment the Polish came to an end and the pairs made their bows to each other, the women again separating from the men, Zavalshévski, happy and proud, took the guest up to the hostess. The marshal's wife, experiencing a certain internal trepidation, for fear the hussar might do something scandalous to her in the presence of everybody, turned haughtily and contemptuously away, as she said: "I am very glad, and hope that you will dance." She looked doubtfully at him, with an expression which said: "If, after this, you will insult a woman, you are nothing but a scoundrel."

However, the count soon vanquished this prejudice by his amiability, attention, and handsome, merry exterior, so that five minutes later the expression of the countenance of the marshal's wife told all the persons surrounding her: "I know how to manage these gentlemen. He saw at once with whom he was speaking, and now he will be charming to me all the evening."

Just then the governor, who had known his father, walked over to the count, very graciously led him to one side, and began to speak to him, which still more reassured the provincial society and in its eyes heightened the reputation of the count. Then Zavalshévski took him over to his sister, a young, plump little widow, who from the moment he had arrived had fastened her black eyes upon him. The count invited the widow to dance a waltz with him, which the musicians had just struck up, and by his elegant dancing completely vanquished the universal prejudice.

"He is great at dancing!" said a stout proprietress watching the legs in the blue riding-trousers, as they gleamed through the parlour, and counting mentally "One, two, three; one, two, three — he is great!"

"He is just stitching, just stitching," said another guest

who was regarded as not belonging to the best provincial society. "I wonder how it is he does not catch with his spurs! He is wonderfully agile!"

The count, with his artistic dancing, put in the shadow three of the best dancers in the Government: the tall, white-haired adjutant of the governor, famous for his rapidity in dancing and for holding the lady very close to him; and a cavalryman, famous for his graceful swaying during the waltz, and for a repeated and light thumping of his heel; and another civilian, of whom all said that, though he had no great amount of brains, he danced superbly, and was the soul of all the balls. Indeed, this civilian, from the beginning of the ball up to the very last, engaged all the ladies in the order in which they were sitting, and never for a moment stopped dancing, resting just long enough to wipe with his cambric handkerchief his weary but cheerful face, covered with heavy perspiration.

The count overshadowed them all, and danced with three leading ladies: with a tall, beautiful, and stupid lady; with another, of middle stature and slender, not very beautiful, but well dressed; and the third, not a beautiful, but a very clever, lady. He also danced with others, — with all the pretty ones, and there were many of these. But the little widow, Zavalshévski's sister, was most to the count's liking; he danced with her a quadrille, an écossaise, and a mazurka. When they sat down at the quadrille, he began to make her all kinds of compliments, comparing her to Venus, and to Diana, and to a wild rose, and to some other flower. To all these compliments the little widow only bent her white neck, lowered her eyes, looking at her muslin dress, or transferred her fan from one hand to another. But when she said, "Stop, count, you are only jesting," and so forth, her slightly guttural voice sounded so naïvely frank and ridiculously foolish, that, looking at her, the thought really occurred to one that she was not a woman, but a flower, and not a wild

rose, but a wild, voluptuous, white-rosed, odourless flower, which had all alone grown up amidst a virgin snow-drift, in some very remote land.

This combination of naïveté and of an absence of everything conventional with her fresh beauty produced such a strange impression upon the count that several times, in the intervals of the conversation, when he silently looked into her eyes, or at the beautiful lines of her arms and neck, he was so strongly assailed by the desire to lift her up in his arms and kiss her, that it cost him some effort to repress himself. The little widow was happy when she saw what an impression she produced upon him; but there was something in the count's address which began to worry and frighten her, notwithstanding the fact that the young hussar was officiously amiable, and, according to modern conceptions, nauseatingly respectful. He ran to fetch her a glass of orgeat, picked up her handkerchief, tore a chair out of the hands of some scrofulous young landed proprietor, who also wanted to serve her, in order to hand it more quickly to her, and so forth.

When he noticed that that which in those days was regarded as worldly politeness had no effect upon his lady, he tried to amuse her by telling her funny anecdotes; he assured her that, if she would order him to do so, he was ready to stand on his head, to crow like a cock, to jump out of the window, or to leap through an ice-hole. This stratagem succeeded completely: the little widow was amused and laughed in trills, displaying superb white teeth, and was quite satisfied with her cavalier. The count took with each moment a greater liking for her, so that by the end of the quadrille he was genuinely in love with her.

When, after the quadrille, the little widow was approached by her former eighteen-year-old admirer, the non-serving son of a very rich proprietor, the same scrofulous young man from whom Túrbin had taken away the

chair, she received him very coldly, and not one-tenth part of the embarrassment was visible which she had experienced in the presence of the count.

"You are a nice one," she said to him, looking all the time at Túrbin's back, and unconsciously reflecting on the amount of gold lace which was used up on the whole dolman. "You are a good one! You promised to come for me for a sleigh-ride, and to bring me some confections."

"But I did come, Anna Fédorovna, and did not find you at home; the confections I left there," said the young man, in a very thin voice, in spite of his tall stature.

"You always find excuses! I do not want your confections. Please, don't imagine —"

"I see, Anna Fédorovna, that you have changed toward me, and I know why. But that is not good," he added, leaving his speech unfinished from some inward agitation, which caused his lips to tremble rapidly and strangely.

Anna Fédorovna was not listening to him, and continued to rivet her eyes on Túrbin.

The marshal, the master of the house, a majestically stout, toothless old man, went up to the count and, taking his arm, invited him to the cabinet to smoke and have something to drink, if he so wished. The moment Túrbin stepped out, Anna Fédorovna felt that there was nothing to do in the parlour, and so she took the arm of a lean old maid, her friend, and went out with her to the cloak-room.

"Well, is he nice?" asked the old maid.

"The only trouble is he is very persistent," replied Anna Fédorovna, walking over to the mirror and examining herself in it.

Her face shone, her eyes smiled, she even blushed, and suddenly, imitating the ballet-dancers, whom she had seen at these elections, she turned around on one foot, then laughed with her guttural but charming laugh, and even jumped up, bending her knees.

"Think of it, he has asked me for a souvenir," she said to her friend, "only he sha'n't ha-a-ave any," she sang out the last words, and raised one finger in her dogskin glove, which reached up to her elbow.

In the cabinet, whither the marshal took Túrbin, there stood all kinds of brandies, liqueurs, appetizers, and champagne. In the tobacco smoke sat and walked noblemen, discussing the elections.

"If the whole worshipful nobility of our county has honoured him with the elections," said the newly elected chief of the rural police, who had imbibed freely, "he ought not to have failed before the whole society, — he ought never — "

The arrival of the count interrupted the conversation. Everybody had himself introduced to him, and particularly the chief for a long time waited with both his hands for his hand, and several times asked him not to refuse his company after the ball at the new restaurant, where he was going to treat the noblemen, and where the gipsies were to sing. The count promised that he certainly would be there, and emptied with him several glasses of champagne.

"Why do you not dance, gentlemen?" he asked, before leaving the room.

"We are no dancers," replied the chief, laughing. "Our specialty is more in the line of wine, count — Besides, count, all these young women have grown up under my eyes! I sometimes will walk like this in the écossaise, count — I can, count!"

"Let us take a walk," said Túrbin, "and amuse ourselves before we go to the gipsies!"

"Come, gentlemen, let us amuse the host!"

And three or four noblemen, who had been drinking in the cabinet from the very beginning of the ball, with red faces, put on some black gloves, and others silk knit gloves, and with the count were getting ready to go to

the parlour, when they were kept back by the scrofulous young man, who, all pale, and with difficulty repressing his tears, went up to Túrbin.

"You think that you are a count, and so you may push one as in the market-place," he said, barely drawing his breath. "That is not polite — "

Again the lips that quivered against his will arrested the torrent of his speech.

"What?" shouted Túrbin, frowning suddenly. "What, boy?" he exclaimed, grasping his hands and compressing them in such a way that the young man's blood rushed to his head, not so much from anger as from fear. "What? You want to fight? I am at your service."

No sooner had Túrbin let the hands go, which he had been squeezing so hard, than two noblemen grabbed the young man under his arms and pulled him away to the back door.

"What is the matter with you? Are you mad? You must have been drinking. We shall have to tell your papa. What is the matter with you?" they said to him.

"No, I have not been drinking, but he has been pushing me, and has not asked to be excused. He is a pig; that's what he is!" screamed the young man, now bursting out into tears.

But they paid no attention to him and took him home.

"Don't mind it, count!" the chief and Zavalshévski, on their side, tried to soothe Túrbin. "He is a mere boy who gets whipped, — he is only sixteen. We can't understand what is the matter with him. What flea has bitten him? His father is such a respectable man, — he is our candidate."

"Well, the devil take him, if he does not wish to — "

The count returned to the parlour, and just as before merrily danced the écossaise with the pretty little widow, and laughed from his whole soul, watching the capers which the gentlemen who had come with him from the

cabinet were cutting, and he burst forth into a melodious laughter, which was heard through the whole parlour, when the chief slipped, and his whole form came down with a crash amidst the dancers.

V.

WHILE the count went into the cabinet, Anna Fédorovna walked over to her brother, and, for some reason or other considering it necessary to be little interested in the count, began to ask him: "Who is that hussar that has been dancing with me? Tell me, brother!" The cavalryman explained to his sister as best he could what a great man the hussar was, and at the same time told her that the count stayed in town only because he had been robbed of his money on his way, and that he himself had loaned him one hundred roubles, which was not enough, so could she not loan him two hundred roubles more? Zavalshévski asked her under no consideration to tell this to anybody, more especially to the count. Anna Fédorovna promised to send the sum to him that very day and to keep the affair secret, but for some reason, during the écossaise, she burned herself to offer to the count as much money as he wished. She for a long time tried to say something and blushed, but finally made an effort over herself and approached him in the following manner:

"My brother told me that you had a misfortune on your journey and that you are left without money. If you need any, won't you take it from me? I should be ever so glad."

But, having said this, Anna Fédorovna suddenly became frightened at something and blushed. The whole merriment in a twinkle disappeared from the count's face.

"Your brother is a fool!" he said, bluntly. "You know that when a man insults another, the result is a duel; and

do you know what is done when a woman insults a man?"

Poor Anna Fédorovna's neck and ears flushed crimson from agitation. She looked abashed and made no reply.

"The woman is kissed in the presence of everybody," softly said the count, bending over her ear. "You permit me at least to kiss your little hand," he softly added, after a long silence, taking pity on his lady's confusion.

"Ah, only not just now," muttered Anna Fédorovna, drawing a deep breath.

"When, if not now? I am going to leave to-morrow morning — And you owe it to me?"

"In that case you can't," said Anna Fédorovna, smiling.

"You just permit me to find an occasion of seeing you to-day, in order to kiss your hand. I will find it."

"How shall you find it?"

"That is not your affair. In order to see you, everything is possible for me — Is it all right?"

"Yes."

The écossaise was ended. They danced a mazurka, in which the count did wonders, catching handkerchiefs, standing on one knee, and striking his spurs in a peculiar Warsaw fashion, so that all the old men left their boston for the parlour to watch him, and the cavalryman, the best dancer, acknowledged himself to have been surpassed. Then they ate supper and danced another Grossvater, and began to depart. The count did not for a moment take his eyes off the little widow. He did not at all pretend when he said that he was ready to jump through an ice-hole for her. Whether it was a mere fancy, or love, or stubbornness, — on that evening all his mental powers were concentrated on the one desire to see and love her. The moment he noticed that Anna Fédorovna was bidding the hostess good-bye, he rushed into the lackey's room, and from there, without his fur coat, into the yard up to the place where the carriages stood.

"The carriage of Anna Fédorovna Zaytsóv!" he shouted. A tall four-seated carriage with lamps started and drove up to the porch. "Stop!" he called out to the coachman, running up to the carriage, knee-deep in the snow.

"What do you wish?" said the coachman.

"I want to get into the carriage," replied the count, opening the door on the run and trying to climb in. "Stop, you devil! Stupid!"

"Váska, stop!" the coachman called out to the outrider and stopped the horses. "Don't climb into other people's carriages. This is the carriage of the Lady Anna Fédorovna, and not your Excellency's."

"Shut up, blockhead! Here is a rouble, and get down and close the door," said the count. But as the coachman did not stir, he himself lifted the steps and, opening the window, managed somehow to slam the door. In the carriage, as in all old carriages, especially in those that were trimmed with yellow gimp, there was an odour of decay and singed bristles. The count's legs were covered up to his knees with thawing snow, and froze in the thin boots and trousers, and his whole body was chilled by the wintry frost. The coachman on his box growled and, so it seemed, wanted to climb down. But the count neither heard nor felt anything. His face was aflame, his heart beat strongly. He tensely clutched the yellow strap and bent out through the side window. His whole life was concentrated in one expectancy. This expectancy did not last long. Somebody on the porch called out: "Madame Zaytsóv's carriage!" The coachman shook his reins, the body of the carriage swayed on its high springs, and the illuminated windows of the house rushed one after the other past the carriage window.

"Look there, you rascal, if you say a word to the lackey that I am here," the count said to the coachman, thrusting his head through the front window, "I'll thrash you; but if you don't, you get ten roubles."

He had barely let down the window, when the carriage again swayed more violently and stopped. He pressed himself into the corner, and even closed his eyes: he was so very much afraid that for some reason his passionate desire would not be fulfilled. The door opened, one after another the steps fell down, a lady's dress rustled, the odour of jessamine penetrated the close carriage, swift feet ran up the steps, and Anna Fédorovna, the skirt of her opened wrap catching on the count's foot, dropped silently, but breathing heavily, in the seat near him.

Nobody, not even Anna Fédorovna, could have decided whether she saw him or not; but when he took her hand and said: "Now I certainly will kiss your little hand," she expressed very little fright and gave him her arm, which he covered with kisses, far above the glove. The carriage started.

"Do say something! Are you angry?" he said to her.

She silently pressed into her corner, but suddenly burst into tears and herself dropped her head upon his bosom.

VI.

THE newly elected chief, with his company, the cavalryman, and other noblemen had long been listening to the gipsies and drinking in the new restaurant, when the count, in a bear fur coat covered with blue cloth, which belonged to Anna Fédorovna's late husband, joined the company.

"Your Serenity! We did not expect you," said a cross-eyed black gipsy, displaying his shining teeth, as he met him in the vestibule. He rushed up to him to take off his overcoat. "We have not seen you since Lebedyán — Stéshka has been wasting away longing for you — "

Stéshka, a slender, young gipsy maiden, with a brick-red blush on her cinnamon-coloured face, with deep, sparkling black eyes, shaded by long lashes, ran out to meet him.

"Ah, my little count! Darling! Golden one! What a joy!" she spoke through her teeth, with a merry smile.

Ilyúshka himself ran out, pretending to be very happy to see him. The women and girls leaped up from their places and surrounded the guest. They claimed sponsorship with him.

Túrbin kissed all the young gipsy maidens on their lips; the old women and men kissed his shoulder and hand. The noblemen, too, were glad of the arrival of the guest, the more so since the carousal, having reached its apogee, was now beginning to cool off, and everybody was experiencing satiety; the wine, having lost its stimulating effect upon the nerves, merely weighed heavily on the

stomach. Everybody had discharged his whole ammunition of bluster and had seen all the dash of everybody else; all the songs had been sung and were mixed up in the head of each, leaving nothing but a loose, noisy impression. No matter what strange or dashing thing one did, it began to occur to them that there was nothing nice or funny in it. The chief, lying in a disgraceful attitude upon the floor, at the feet of some old woman, wriggled his legs and called out:

"Champagne! The count has arrived! — Champagne! — He has arrived! — Well, the champagne? — I will make a bath of champagne, and will bathe in it — Gentlemen of the nobility! I love the worshipful society of noblemen! — Stéshka, sing 'The Road'!"

The cavalryman was also jolly, but in a different way. He was sitting in the corner of a divan, very close to a tall, beautiful gipsy maiden, Lyubásha by name. Feeling that the intoxication was dimming his eyes, he flapped them vigorously, shook his head, and, repeating all the time the same words, in a whisper tried to persuade her to run with him somewhere. Lyubásha, smiling, listened to him, as though that which he was telling her was very jolly and, at the same time, sad; she now and then cast glances at her husband, cross-eyed Sáshka, who was standing behind a chair opposite her, and, in response to the cavalryman's declaration of love, bent over his ear and asked him secretly to buy her some perfume and ribbons, which no one should see.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the cavalryman when the count entered.

The beautiful young man, with a careworn face, was walking up and down the room with firm steps, and singing tunes from the "Rebellion in the Seraglio."

An old father of a family, who had been enticed into the company of the gipsy girls by the urgent entreaties of the noblemen, who insisted that without him the

whole fun would be gone and, therefore, they had better not go, was lying on a divan, upon which he had thrown himself soon after his arrival, and nobody was paying any attention to him. An official, who was also there, having taken off his dress coat, was sitting with his feet on a table; he was tousling his hair and in that way proving that he was out on an awful spree. The moment the count came in, he unbuttoned the collar of his shirt and sat up higher upon the table. Altogether the carousal received a new lease of life with the arrival of the count.

The gipsy maidens, who had scattered throughout the room, again sat down in a circle. The count put Stéshka, the song starter, upon his knees, and ordered more champagne.

Ilyúshka stood up with his guitar in front of the song starter, and there began the dance, that is, the gipsy songs: "When I walk along the street," "Oh, you hussars," "Do you hear and understand?" and so forth, in a certain order. Stéshka sang superbly. Her pliable, melodious contralto, which gushed from her very chest, her smiles during the singing, her laughing, passionate eyes, her foot involuntarily moving to keep time with the song, her despairing shriek at the beginning of the chorus, — all that touched a certain sonorous, but rarely struck, string. It was evident that she lived only in the song which she was singing.

Ilyúshka, with his smile, his back, his feet, his whole being expressing sympathy for the song, accompanied her on the guitar and, riveting his eyes upon her as though he were for the first time hearing the song, attentively and solicitously keeping time with the song, inclined and raised his head. Then he suddenly straightened himself up with the last melodious note and, as though feeling himself higher than anybody else in the world, proudly and firmly threw up the guitar with his foot, turned it upside down, tossed his hair, and, frowning, surveyed the

chorus. His whole body, from his neck to his heels, began to dance with every muscle — twenty energetic, strong voices, each trying to second the other in the strangest and most unusual manner possible, mingled in the air. The old women leaped about on the chairs, waving their kerchiefs, and, displaying their teeth, shouted in harmony and in time, one louder than the other. The basses bent their heads sidewise and, straining their throats, uttered their deep voices, while standing back of the chairs.

As Stéshka sang out her high notes, Ilyúshka carried the guitar up to her, as though wishing to help her, and the handsome young man exclaimed in ecstasy that now began the B minors.

When they started to play a dancing song and Dunyásha, with quivering shoulders and bosom, passed by and, making evolutions before the count, glided on, Túrbin jumped up from his seat, threw off his uniform, and, being left in his red shirt, danced around with her in proper time and cut such capers with his feet that the gipsies smiled approvingly and cast glances at each other.

The chief sat down in Turkish fashion, hit his chest with his fist, and shouted, "Hail!" Then he seized the count by the leg and began to tell him that he had had two thousand roubles, but that now there were only five hundred left, and that he could do anything he wished, if only the count would let him. The old father of a family awoke and wanted to leave; but he was not permitted to do so. The handsome young man begged a gipsy maiden to dance a waltz with him. The cavalryman, desiring to brag of his friendship with the count, got up from his corner and embraced Túrbin.

"Ah, you darling!" he said, "why did you run away from us? Eh?" The count was silent, apparently thinking of something else. "Where did you go to? Oh, you rogue, count, I know where you went."

Túrbin for some reason did not like this hail-fellow-well-met. He looked, without smiling, into the cavalryman's face, and discharged such a terrible, coarse oath at him that he became offended and for a long time did not know how to accept this insult, whether as a joke or not. Finally he decided to regard it as a joke, and so he smiled and again went to his gipsy maiden, and assured her that he would marry her by all means after Easter.

Another song was started, and a third; and again they danced and drank healths, and they all continued to think that it was all very jolly. The count drank much. His eyes seemed to be shrouded by moisture; he did stagger, but he danced even better, spoke firmly, and himself sang with the chorus and seconded Stéshka when she sang "Friendship's Gentle Agitation."

In the middle of the dance the merchant proprietor of the restaurant stepped in to ask the guests to depart, as it was now three o'clock in the morning. The count grabbed the merchant by the collar and commanded him to dance the national jig. The merchant refused. The count grasped a bottle of champagne and, turning the merchant head downward, told them to keep him in that position, while he, under a universal roar of laughter, slowly emptied the whole bottle upon him.

Day was breaking. All were pale and exhausted, except the count.

"Well, I must start for Moscow," he suddenly said, getting up. "Boys, come all of you with me! See me off — and we shall have tea together."

All consented, except the landed proprietor, who was asleep and was left there. They packed three sleighs that were standing at the entrance, and drove to the hotel.

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VII.

"HITCH up!" shouted the count, as he entered the guest-room of the hotel with all the guests and the gipsies. "Sáshka! — not Gipsy Sáshka, but mine, — tell the inspector that I will thrash him if the horses are not good. Let us have tea! Zavalshévski, attend to the tea, and I will go to Ilín, to see how he is getting on," added Túrbin. He went out into the corridor and directed his steps to Ilín's room.

Ilín had just finished playing and, having lost the last kopek of all his money, was lying face downward upon a torn haircloth couch, pulling out one hair after another, putting them into his mouth, cutting them with his teeth, and spitting them out again. Two tallow dips, one of which had burned down to the paper, were standing on the card-covered green table and feebly struggling with the daylight which was penetrating through the windows.

There were no ideas passing through the uhlan's mind: the dense mist of a gambling passion shrouded all his mental capacities; there was not even any repentance. He tried just once to think of what he ought to do, how to leave without a kopek, how to pay back the fifteen thousand of Crown money, what the commander of the regiment would say, and what his mother and friends would say, — and he was assailed by such terror and such disgust with himself that, wishing in some way to forget himself, he arose, began to pace through the room, trying to step on the cracks of the deals only, and again recalled all the minutest circumstances of the game which had

just taken place. He vividly imagined that he was winning back and taking off the nine and putting down the king of spades on two thousand roubles; to the right fell a queen, to the left an ace, to the right a king of diamonds, — and everything was lost; if a six had fallen on the right, and on the left the king of diamonds, he would have won it all back. Then he would have staked everything on *p* and would have won fifteen thousand clean; then he would have bought the ambling charger of the commander of the regiment, and another span of horses, and a phaeton. And what else? Yes, it would have been a glorious, a glorious thing!

He again lay down on the couch and began to chew the hair.

"Why are they singing there, in number seven?" he thought. "It must be at Túrbin's that they are having a jollification. I will go there and take a good drink of something."

Just then the count entered.

"Well, my friend, are you broke, eh?" he shouted.

"I will pretend I am asleep," thought Ilín, "or else I shall have to talk with him, and I am sleepy."

Túrbin walked over to him and stroked his head.

"Well, my dear friend, are you broke? All lost? Speak!"

Ilín made no reply.

The count pulled him by the arm.

"I have lost, — what is that to you?" muttered Ilín, in a sleepy, indifferent, and dissatisfied voice, without changing his position.

"Everything?"

"Well, yes. What of it? Everything. What is it to you?"

"Listen. Do tell me the truth, as to a comrade," said the count, inclined to tenderness under the influence of the wine which he had drunk, and continuing to stroke

his hair. "Really, I have taken a liking to you. Tell me the truth: if you have lost Crown money, I will get you out of trouble; else it will be too late — Was there any Crown money?"

Ilín jumped up from his couch.

"If you want me to tell you, you had better not speak with me, because — Please, don't speak to me — all that there is left for me to do is to send a bullet through my brain!" he muttered, with genuine despair, dropping his head on his hands and bursting out into tears, although but a minute ago he had been quietly thinking of ambling horses.

"Oh, you are a pretty maiden! To whom has such a thing not happened? It is no misfortune: maybe we can mend it. Wait here for me!"

The count went out of the room.

"Where does Proprietor Lúkhnov stop?" he asked a hotel servant.

The servant offered to take him there. The count, in spite of the lackey's remark that his master had only just returned and was undressing himself, entered the room. Lúkhnov was sitting at a table, dressed in a morning-gown, and was counting several heaps of assignats that were lying before him. On the table stood a bottle of port, of which he was very fond. He permitted himself that pleasure on account of his winning. Lúkhnov looked coldly and sternly, above his spectacles, at the count, as though not recognizing him.

"You do not seem to recognize me," said the count, walking over to the table with determined steps.

Lúkhnov recognized the count, and asked:

"What do you wish?"

"I want to play with you," said Túrbin, sitting down on the couch.

"Now?"

"Yes."

"Any other time with pleasure, count! But now I am tired and am about to retire. Won't you have some wine? It is good wine."

"I want to play now a little."

"I am not disposed for playing now. Maybe some of the other gentlemen will play with you, but I will not, count! You must excuse me."

"So you will not?"

Lúkhnov made with his shoulder a gesture which expressed regret at his inability to comply with the count's wish.

"Under no considerations?"

Again the same gesture.

"I beg you — Well, will you play?"

Silence.

"Will you play?" the count asked for the second time. "Hear!"

The same silence and rapid glance over the spectacles at the count's face, which was beginning to frown.

"Will you play?" the count shouted, in a loud voice, banging the table so hard with his fist that the bottle of port fell down and the wine was spilled. "You have not been playing fair! Will you play? I ask you for the third time."

"I told you, no. This is indeed strange, count! It is not a bit polite to put a knife to a man's throat," remarked Lúkhnov, without raising his eyes.

There ensued a brief silence, during which the count's face grew ever more pale. Suddenly a terrible blow in the head stunned Lúkhnov. He fell down on the couch, trying to seize his money, and cried out in a penetrating and despairing voice, such as could not have been expected from this ever calm and imposing figure. Túrbin swept up all the money that was left on the table, brushed aside the servant, who had run in to help his master, and with rapid strides left the room.

"If you wish satisfaction, I am at your service. I shall remain in number seven half an hour longer," added the count, coming back to Lúkhnov's door.

"Scoundrel! Robber!" was the voice that proceeded from within. "I will have you criminally prosecuted!"

Ilín, without paying the least attention to the count's promise to save him, was lying on the couch in his room in the same attitude, and tears of despair choked him.

The consciousness of reality, which the kindness and sympathy of the count had evoked through the strange maze of feelings, thoughts, and recollections that filled his soul, did not leave him. Youth rich in hopes, honour, the respect of society, dreams of love and friendship, — everything was for ever lost. The spring of tears was beginning to run dry; a much too calm sensation of hopelessness ever more took possession of him, and the thought of suicide, no longer provoking disgust and terror, ever more frequently arrested his attention. Just then were heard the count's firm steps.

On Túrbin's countenance could still be seen the traces of anger, and his hands trembled a little, but his eyes beamed with kindly merriment and self-satisfaction.

"Here! I have won it back!" he said, throwing several packages of assignats upon the table. "Count them up and see whether it is all there! Come directly to the guest-room, — I shall leave at once," he added, as though not noticing the terrible agitation of joy and gratitude which was expressed in the uhlan's face, and, whistling some gipsy song, left the room.

VIII.

SÁSHKA, girding on his belt, informed him that the horses were ready, but insisted that it was necessary first to go down and get the count's overcoat, which, he said, with the collar was worth three hundred roubles, and to return the accursed blue fur coat to the rascal who at the marshal's had exchanged it for the overcoat. Túrbin told him that it was not necessary to look for the overcoat, and went to his room to change his clothes.

The cavalryman incessantly hiccoughed, sitting silently near his gipsy maiden. The chief ordered some brandy, invited all the gentlemen to his house to eat breakfast, and promised them that his wife would certainly come out and dance with the gipsies. The handsome young man thoughtfully explained to Ilyúshka that there was more soulfulness in the piano, and that it was not possible to play B minors on a guitar. The official sadly drank tea in a corner, and in the daylight seemed to be ashamed of his debauch. The gipsies disputed among themselves in gipsy language, and insisted that the gentlemen ought to be hailed again, to which Stéshka was opposed, saying that the *baroray* (in gipsy language it means "count" or "prince," or, more correctly, "a great gentleman") would be angry. Altogether, the last spark of the riotous debauch was burning low.

"Well, give us another song before parting, and march! home!" said the count, fresh, merry, beautiful more than ever, as he entered the room in travelling attire.

The gipsies again placed themselves in a circle, and were just getting ready to sing, when Ilín entered with a batch of assignats in his hand and called the count aside.

"I had in all fifteen thousand of Crown money, and you gave me sixteen thousand three hundred," he said. "This must be yours."

"That's nice! Let me have it!"

Ilín gave him the money. He looked timidly at the count and opened his mouth, wishing to say something, but only blushed so that the tears stood in his eyes; then he seized the count's hand, and began to press it.

"Get away! Ilyúshka! Listen! Here is some money for you, if you will take me to the toll-gate with songs." And he threw down on his guitar one thousand and three hundred roubles, which Ilín had brought him. Still, the count forgot to pay back the hundred roubles which he had borrowed the day before of the cavalryman.

It was ten o'clock of the forenoon. The sun had risen above the roofs; people were hurrying through the streets; the merchants had long ago opened their shops; noblemen and officials were driving through the streets; ladies were walking through merchants' row, — when the band of gipsies, the chief, the cavalryman, the handsome young man, Ilín, and the count went out on the porch of the hotel. It was a sunny day and a thaw. Three stage tróykas, with shortly tied up tails, plashing with their feet in the liquid mud, drove up to the porch, and the whole merry company took their seats. The count, Ilín, Stéshka, Ilyúshka, and Sáshka, the orderly, sat down in the first sleigh. Blücher was beside himself, and, wagging his tail, barked at the centre horse. The other gentlemen and the gipsies seated themselves in the other sleighs. The sleighs started abreast at the very hotel, and the gipsies began to sing a choral song.

The sleighs, with their songs and bells, compelling all

the passing sleighs to take to the sidewalk, crossed the whole city up to the toll-gate.

The merchants and passers-by, strangers, and especially acquaintances, were surprised when they saw the noblemen driving in daylight through the streets with songs, gipsy women, and drunken gipsy men.

When they reached the toll-gate, the sleighs stopped and all began to bid the count farewell.

Ilín, who had drunk a great deal at parting, and who had all the time handled the horses, suddenly grew sad and began to ask the count to stay there another day; but when he became convinced that this was impossible, he quite unexpectedly, with tears in his eyes, started to kiss his new friend, and promised him that as soon as he got back, he would ask to be transferred as a hussar to the same regiment in which Túrbin served. The count was unusually happy; he threw the cavalryman, who had persisted since morning in saying "thou" to him, into a snowdrift; he urged Blücher on the chief; he caught Stéshka in his arms and wanted to take her to Moscow, and finally leaped into the sleigh and put near him Blücher, who wanted to stay by all means in the middle. Sáshka again asked the cavalryman to get the count's overcoat from them and to send it to them, and jumped on the box. The count shouted, "Go!" took off his cap and waved it over his head, and in driver's fashion whistled at the horses. The sleighs parted from each other.

Far in front could be seen a monotonous, snow-covered plain, through which wound the yellowish dirty road. The bright sun, playing, shone on the thawing snow with its transparent crust, and pleasantly warmed both face and back. Steam rose from the perspiring horses. The bell clattered merrily. A peasant, with a hamper on a swaying sleigh, pulled at his rope reins

and swiftly took to the side, in his run plashing with his wet bast shoes in the thawing road; a stout, red peasant woman, with a baby in the bosom of her sheepskin, was sitting in another wagon, urging on a white, scanty-tailed dobbin with the ends of the reins. The count suddenly thought of Anna Fédorovna.

"Turn back!" he shouted.

The driver did not understand at first.

"Turn back! Back to the city! Lively!"

The tróyka again passed through the toll-gate and briskly drove up to the frame porch of the house of Madame Zaytsóv. The count swiftly ran up the stairs, passed through the antechamber and drawing-room, and finding the little widow still asleep, took her in his arms, lifted her out of her bed, kissed her sleepy eyes, and rapidly ran out again. Anna Fédorovna smacked her lips half-asleep, and asked what had happened. The count jumped into his sleigh, shouted to the driver, and, no longer stopping, nor even thinking of Lúkhnov, nor of the widow, nor of Stéshka, but only of what awaited him in Moscow, left the city of K—— for ever.

IX.

TWENTY years passed. Much water had flowed since then; many people had died; many were born; many had grown up or grown old; still more thoughts had been born and had died; many beautiful and many bad old things had perished, and still more half-grown, ugly, and youthful things had made their appearance in God's world.

Count Fédor Túrbin had long been killed in a duel with some foreigner, whom he had flogged with a hunting-whip in the street; his son, resembling him as two drops of water resemble each other, was at that time a twenty-three-year-old, charming young man, and served in the horse-guard. Morally, young Túrbin did not resemble his father in the least. There was not even a shadow left in him of those riotous, impassioned, and, to tell the truth, perverse inclinations of the past generation. Together with his intelligence, culture, and inherited natural talent, love of decency and comfort of life, a practical view of men and affairs, propriety and caution were his distinctive qualities. In the army the young count was very successful; at twenty-three he was already a lieutenant. At the opening of the war he concluded that it was more profitable for advancement to pass over to the active army, and so he joined a regiment of hussars as a captain, and soon received the command of a squadron.

In the month of May of the year 1848, the S—— regiment on its march passed through the Government

of K——, and the squadron under the command of young Count Túrbin had to stay overnight at Morózovka, Anna Fédorovna's village. Anna Fédorovna was alive, but so advanced in age that she called herself old, which means a great deal for a woman. She had grown very stout, which, they say, makes a woman look young; but even on this white obesity could be seen large wrinkles. She never visited the city, and with difficulty climbed into her carriage; but she was just as good-natured and just as silly, one may now say truly, when she no longer bribed people with her beauty. With her lived her daughter, Líza, a twenty-three-year-old Russian country beauty, and her brother, our friend the cavalryman, who, as a result of his good nature, had gone through with his whole small estate, and in his old age had found a refuge with Anna Fédorovna. His hair was entirely gray, his upper lip drooped, but the moustache was carefully blackened. Wrinkles covered not only his forehead and cheeks, but even his nose and neck; his back was bent, and yet, in his weak, crooked legs, one could perceive the manner of an old cavalryman.

In the small drawing-room of an old little house, with the open door and windows of the balcony facing an ancient star-shaped linden garden, sat the whole family and the house-folk of Anna Fédorovna. Anna Fédorovna, with gray head, dressed in a lilac jacket, was sitting on a couch at a round red wood table, and laying cards. Her old brother had taken up a position near the window. He wore white pantaloons and a blue coat, and was braiding a thin strip of white paper on a forked needle, an occupation which his niece had taught him, and which he liked very much, since he was unable to do anything else, and his eyes were too weak for his favourite occupation, the reading of newspapers. Pímochka, Anna Fédorovna's adopted child, was sitting near him, and learning a lesson under the guidance of Líza, who, at

the same time, was knitting stockings of goat wool for her uncle on wooden needles.

The setting sun, as always at that period of the year, was casting its last broken, slanting rays through the linden avenue, and through the farthest window and upon the étagère which was standing near it. In the garden and the room it was so quiet that one could hear the flapping of a swallow's wings beyond the window, or the soft sigh of Anna Fédorovna in the room, or the light groan of the old man, as he placed one leg over the other.

"How do you lay the cards? Líza, dear, show me! I keep forgetting," said Anna Fédorovna, stopping in the middle of her solitaire.

Líza, without laying aside her work, walked over to her mother and, looking at the cards, she said:

"Ah, you have mixed it all up, mother, dear!" and putting the cards right: "This is the way it ought to be. Still, that which you have in mind will come to pass," she added, taking away a card so as not to be seen.

"Oh, you are always cheating me! You always say that it has come out right."

"Really, I tell you, it will come out. Surely."

"All right, all right, you joker! Is it not time for tea?"

"I have ordered them to get the samovár ready. I will go at once and see. Shall I have it brought here? — Well, Pímochka, get through with your lesson, and we will go out running."

Líza went out through the door.

"Líza, Líza!" said the uncle, looking fixedly at his forked needle, "I think I have again lost a mesh. Catch it for me, darling!"

"Directly, directly! I will only order the sugar chopped."

Indeed, three minutes later she ran into the room, walked over to her uncle, and took him by the ear.

"That's what you get for losing meshes," she said, laughing. "You have not finished braiding your lesson."

"That will do, that will do! Fix it! There must have been some knot."

Líza took the fork, took a pin out of her kerchief, which the wind, coming in through the window, in the meantime fluttered a little, and managed with the pin to get at the mesh; she pulled it through two or three times and returned the fork to her uncle.

"Kiss me for it," she said, offering him her ruddy cheek and pinning up her kerchief. "You will get rum with your tea this evening. To-day is Friday."

She again went into the tea-room.

"Uncle, go and see! Hussars are coming here!" was heard from there her melodious voice.

Anna Fédorovna and her brother went into the tea-room, the windows of which looked out upon the village, in order to look at the hussars. Very little could be seen from the window; all that could be made out through the dust was that a crowd was in motion.

"It is a pity, sister," the uncle remarked to Anna Fédorovna, "that these quarters are so crowded, and that the wing has not yet been fixed, or we might have invited the officers to stay here. The officers among the hussars are all such splendid and merry young people. I should like to look at them."

"I should be quite willing to have them, but you know yourself, brother, that we have no place for them: my sleeping-room, Líza's chamber, the drawing-room, and your room, — that is all. Where can we put them here? Judge for yourself. Mikháylo Matvyéev has cleaned up the elder's house for them; he says it is clean there now."

"Líza, we might have found a husband for you among them, — some fine hussar!" said the uncle.

"No, I do not want a hussar; I want a uhlan. Did you

not serve as a uhlan, uncle? These people I do not care to know. They are desperate people, they say."

Líza blushed a little, but again laughed her sonorous laugh.

"Ustyúshka is running this way. I must ask her what she has seen," she said.

Anna Fédorovna sent for Ustyúshka.

"There is no such a thing as sticking to your work. What need was there to run to see the soldiers?" said Anna Fédorovna. "Well, where have the officers been stationed?"

"At the Erémkins', madame. Two of them are so handsome, and one of them, they say, is a count."

"What is his name?"

"I do not remember right whether it was Kazárov or Túrbinov, I am sorry to say."

"Stupid girl, she can't even tell a thing straight. If she had only found out the name."

"Well, I'll run down again."

"I know that you are a great hand on that. No, let Danílo run down. Tell him, brother, to run down and ask whether the officers need anything. I must be polite, and let him tell them that the lady has asked about them."

The old people again sat down in the tea-room, and Líza went to the maids' room to put the chopped sugar into a box. Ustyúshka was there telling about the hussars.

"My lady dear, what a beauty that count is!" she said. "He is simply a black-eyed cherub. What a fine pair you and he would be!"

The other chambermaids smiled approvingly. The old nurse, who was sitting with a stocking at the window, sighed and pronounced a prayer, drawing in her breath.

"So you like the hussars very much," said Líza. "You are clever at telling about them. Ustyúshka, bring me

some must, — to give the hussars something sour to drink."

Líza, smiling, left the room, with the sugar-bowl in her hands.

"I should like to see what kind of a hussar he is," she thought, "whether he is dark-complexioned or a blond? I think he would be glad to become acquainted with us. If he marches off, he will not know that I was here and thought of him. How many such have passed by me! Nobody sees me but uncle and Ustyúshka. It makes no difference how I comb my hair and what sleeves I put on, nobody admires me," she thought, with a sigh, looking at her white, plump hand. "He must be tall and he, no doubt, has large eyes and a small black moustache. No, twenty-two years are past, and no one has yet fallen in love with me, except freckled Iván Ignátych; and four years ago I was even prettier: my girlish youth has gone without any joy to any one. Oh, I am an unfortunate village maiden."

Her mother's voice, calling her to serve the tea, brought the village maiden out of her momentary meditation. She tossed her little head and went into the tea-room.

The best things always happen by accident; but the more you try, the worse they come out. In the country they seldom endeavour to give an education, and thus without premeditation they generally give something beautiful.

This was particularly the case with Líza. Anna Fédorovna, on account of her limited capacity and careless manner, had given Líza no education whatever; she had taught her no music, nor the so useful French language. She without premeditation bore by her deceased husband a healthy, pretty child, whom she gave to a nurse to feed and bring up; she dressed her in chintz dresses and kid leather shoes, sent her to pick mushrooms and berries, and had her taught reading and arithmetic by a

seminarist hired for the purpose; she without premeditation found in her, sixteen years later, a friend and an ever cheerful and good-natured soul and an active mistress of the house.

Anna Fédorovna, through the goodness of her heart, always had some girls to bring up, either peasant babes or foundlings. Líza began to busy herself with them in her tenth year: she taught them, dressed them, took them to church, and stopped them when they became too naughty.

Then there appeared the decrepit, good-natured uncle, who had to be attended to like a child. Then there were the servants and peasants, who turned to the young lady with all kinds of requests and in their ailments, which she cured with elderberries, mint, and spirit of camphor. Then the whole house incidentally passed over into her hands. Then there was the unsatisfied need of love, which found its expression in Nature and religion alone. Thus, without premeditation, Líza turned out to be an active, good-natured, independent, pure, and deeply religious woman.

It is true, there were small sufferings of vanity at the sight of neighbours in fashionable hats brought from K——, who were standing at her side in church; there were annoyances, leading to tears, at her old, grumbling mother for her caprices; there were also dreams of love in the most insipid and at times in coarse forms, — but her useful activity, which had become her second nature, dispersed all these, and at twenty-two years not one spot, not one pang of conscience, had fallen into this bright, calm soul of the girl who had grown up full of physical and moral beauty.

Líza was of medium stature, rather plump than slender; her eyes were hazel, small, with a slight dark tinge on her lower lid; her hair was long and blonde. She had a broad and swaying gait, — what is called a duck's waddle.

The expression of her face, when she was busy working and nothing in particular agitated her, told everybody who looked at it: "It is a joy to live in the world, if you have some one to love and if your conscience is pure." Even in moments of vexation, confusion, alarm, or sorrow, there beamed, through a tear, through the frowning left side of her brow, through the compressed lips, — there beamed, as though in spite of her wish, a good, frank heart, uncorrupted by reason, and so, too, in the dimples of her cheek, in the corners of her lips, and in her sparkling eyes, which were accustomed to smile and enjoy life.

X.

It was still warm in the air, although the sun was setting, when the squadron entered Morózovka. In front, along the dusty road of the village, there galloped, looking around and now and then stopping to low, a brindle cow, which had strayed from the herd, without considering that all she had to do was to step to one side. The village old men, women, and children eagerly watched the hussars, crowding on both sides of the road. The hussars moved with a clatter through a dense cloud of smoke, on black horses with bridle-bits, that were snorting now and then. On the right side of the squadron rode two officers, sitting loosely on their black chargers. One of these was the commander, Count Túrbin, and the other a very young man, who had lately been promoted from yunkership, Pólozov.

From the best hut there issued a hussar in a white blouse. He took off his cap and walked over to the officers.

"Where have we been assigned quarters?" asked the count.

"For your Serenity?" replied the quartermaster-sergeant, jerking his whole body. "Here, at the elder's,—the house has been cleaned. I demanded a place at the manor, but they said there was none. The proprietress is such a cross woman."

"Very well," said the count, dismounting and stretching his legs near the elder's hut. "Has my carriage arrived?"

"It has, your Serenity!" replied the quartermaster-sergeant, pointing with his cap to the leather body of the carriage, which was visible through the gate, and rushing ahead into the vestibule of the hut, which was filled with a peasant family looking at the officer. He even knocked over a woman, as he dashingly opened the door to the cleaned-up room, and stepped aside before the officer.

The room was quite large and spacious, but not very clean. A German valet, dressed as a gentleman, stood in the room. He had put up an iron bed and had made it up, and was now taking things out of the portmanteau.

"Fie! What horrible quarters!" said the count, in vexation. "Dyadénko! Could you not have found anything at the manor?"

"If your Serenity so order, I will go to the manor," replied Dyadénko, "but the house is not much: it does not look much better than a hut."

"It is too late now. Be gone!"

The count lay down on his bed, putting his arms back of his head.

"Johann!" he called out to his valet. "You have again made a mound in the middle! Why can't you make a bed decently?"

Johann wanted to fix it.

"No, not now. Where is the morning-gown?" he continued, in a dissatisfied voice.

The servant handed him his morning-gown.

Before putting it on, the count looked at the skirt of the morning-gown.

"Precisely: you have not taken out the spot. I wonder whether it is possible for one to be a worse servant than you are," he added, pulling the morning-gown out of his hands, and putting it on. "Tell me, are you doing it on purpose? — Is tea ready?"

"I did not have time," replied Johann.

"Fool!"

After that the count took a French novel, which had been placed near him, and for quite awhile read it in silence; in the meantime, Johann was fanning the samovár on the outside. It was apparent that the count was in bad humour, no doubt, under the influence of fatigue, a dusty face, tight clothing, and a hungry stomach.

"Johann!" he called out again. "Let me see the account of the ten roubles. What did you buy in town?"

The count ran through the account which was handed to him and made dissatisfied remarks in regard to the expensiveness of the purchases.

"Let me have rum with the tea!"

"I have not bought any rum," said Johann.

"Very well! How many times have I told you to have rum!"

"There was not enough money."

"Why did Pólozov not buy it? You ought to have taken from his man."

"Cornet Pólozov? I do not know. He bought tea and sugar."

"Beast! Get out! You are the only one that makes me lose my patience: you know that I always drink tea with rum on marches."

"Here are two letters for you from the staff," said the valet.

The count remained lying as he opened the letters and began to read them. The cornet, who had taken the squadron to quarters, came in with a cheerful countenance.

"Well, Túrbin? It seems nice here. I am tired, I must confess. It was hot."

"Very well! An accursed, stinking room, and through your kindness there is no rum: your blockhead has not bought any, and this one neither. You ought to have told him."

He continued reading. Having finished his letter, he crumpled it and threw it on the floor.

"Why did you not buy any rum?" the cornet in the meantime asked his orderly in a whisper in the vestibule. "You did have money!"

"Why should we be buying all the time? As it is I keep the accounts, while that German in there only smokes his pipe, and that's all."

The second letter was evidently not unpleasant, because the count read it with a smile.

"From whom is it?" asked Pólozov, upon returning to the room and fixing a bed for himself on boards, near the oven.

"From Mína," merrily replied the count, handing him the letter. "Do you want to read it? What a charming woman she is! Really, much better than our young ladies — Just see how much feeling and sense there is in this letter! — There is just one bad thing, — she asks for money."

"Yes, that is not good," remarked the cornet.

"It is true, I have promised her; but now we have the expedition, and — still, if I am going to command the squadron three months longer, I will send her some. I do not begrudge it. What a charming girl! Isn't she?" he said, smiling, watching the expression of Pólozov's face, as he read the letter.

"Terribly misspelled, but sweet, and, I think, she really loves you," replied the cornet.

"Hem, I should say so! These women love genuinely, when they love one."

"And the other letter, from whom is it?" asked the cornet, giving him back the one he had been reading.

"Well — there is a gentleman, a pretty worthless one, to whom I owe at cards, and this is the third time he reminds me of it — I can't give it to him now — a pretty stupid letter!" answered the count, apparently saddened by this recollection.

The two officers kept silent for quite awhile after this

conversation. The cornet, who, obviously, was under the influence of the count, drank tea in silence, occasionally looking at the handsome, clouded countenance of Túrbin, who was looking through the window, and could not make up his mind to start a conversation.

"Well, I may turn out pretty well," the count said, suddenly turning to Pólozov and merrily tossing his head. "If there is any promotion this year along the line, and we get into action, I may get ahead of the captains of the guard."

The conversation on the same theme was continued at the second glass of tea, when old Danílo entered and transmitted Anna Fédorovna's order.

"She has also ordered me to find out whether you were not the son of Count Fédor Ivánovich Túrbin?" Danílo added on his own account, when he heard the officer's name, and recalled the stay of the late count at K——. "Our lady, Anna Fédorovna, used to be very well acquainted with him."

"That was my father; tell your lady that I am very much obliged and that I need nothing, only I should like to have a little cleaner room, in the house, or somewhere."

"Why are you doing that?" said Pólozov, when Danílo left. "What difference does it make? We might just as well stay here one night, while it will incommode them."

"I declare! It seems to me we have had enough of smoky rooms! One can see at once that you are not a practical man — Why not make use of the opportunity of being housed even one night like decent people? They, on the contrary, will be very happy themselves. There is just one annoying thing: if this lady really knew father," continued the count, displaying his white, shining teeth with a smile. "I shall always have to feel ashamed for *papa:* it is always some scandal or some debt. For this

reason I hate to meet these acquaintances of father. Still, that was such an age," he added, seriously.

"I have not told you," said Pólozov, "that I happened to meet Ilín, the commander of a brigade of uhlans. He was very anxious to see you, and was desperately in love with your father."

"It seems to me this Ilín is a horrible fellow. The main thing is that all these gentlemen who insist that they knew father tell me, in order to gain my favour, as pleasant little stories, such dreadful things about father that I am ashamed to listen to them. It is true, I am not carried away, and I look with an unbiassed mind at things, — he was an exceedingly ardent nature, and sometimes did quite unseemly things. Still, it is all a matter of the times. In our day he, very likely, would have been a very decent kind of a man, because he had enormous capacities, — I must give him justice."

Fifteen minutes later the servant returned and informed them of the lady's request to come for the night to the house.

XI.

HAVING learned that the officer of hussars was the son of Fédor Túrbin, Anna Fédorovna was all in a flutter.

"Ah, my dear ones! It is he, the darling! — Danílo! Run fast, and tell him that the lady invites him to the house," she exclaimed, jumping up and with rapid steps moving toward the maids' chamber. "Líza! Ustyúshka! Your room, Líza, will have to be fixed up. You go to uncle's room; and you brother — brother! you sleep in the drawing-room. It won't hurt you just one night."

"Never mind, sister! I will sleep on the floor."

"He must be a handsome fellow if he is like his father. I would just like to get a look at him, my darling — Look here, Líza! His father was such a handsome man — Where are you taking the table to? Leave it here," Anna Fédorovna was all in a flutter, "and bring two beds, — get one from the steward, — and take the crystal candlestick, the one brother gave me on my name-day, down from the étagère, and put into it a Callet candle."

At last everything was in order. Líza, in spite of her mother's interference, arranged her room for the two officers according to her own idea. She took out clean, mignonette-scented bedclothes and made the beds, ordered a decanter of water and candles to be placed on a little table near by, lighted the candles with a piece of paper in the maids' room, and betook herself with her little bed to her uncle's room.

Anna Fédorovna quieted down a little, again sat down

in her chair, even took the cards in her hands, but, without laying them out, leaned on her plump elbow and fell to musing.

"How time flies!" she said to herself in a whisper. "It is but recently, it seems, that I saw him. Ah, what a jester he was!" Tears appeared in her eyes. "Now it is Líza — but she is not what I was at her age — She is a good girl, but no, not the same — "

"Líza, you ought to put on your muslin delaine dress for this evening."

"Are you going to invite them in, mamma? You had better not," replied Líza, experiencing an insuperable agitation at the thought of seeing the officers. "You had better not, mamma!"

Indeed, she was not so desirous of seeing them as she was afraid of a certain agitating happiness which, so it seemed to her, was awaiting her.

"They may themselves wish to become acquainted, Líza!" said Anna Fédorovna, stroking her hair and thinking at the same time: "No, not the air I had at her age. O Líza, how I should wish for you — " She really wanted something for her daughter, but she could not imagine a marriage with the count, nor could she wish for such relations as had existed between her and his father, — still, there was something which she wanted very much for her daughter. Maybe she wanted, through her daughter's soul, to live over the life which she had lived with the deceased count.

The old cavalryman, too, was somewhat agitated by the arrival of the count. He went to his room and locked himself in. Fifteen minutes later he issued from it in a Hungarian coat and blue pantaloons, and, with an embarrassed and satisfied expression on his countenance, such as a girl has when she for the first time puts on a ball dress, went into the room which was set aside for the

"I will take a look at the hussars of these days, sister! The late count was, indeed, a genuine hussar. I will take a look at him, I will."

The officers arrived by the back porch at the room prepared for them.

"Well, don't you see," said the count, throwing himself as he was, in his dusty boots, on the bed made up for them, "is it not better here than in the hut with the cockroaches?"

"Of course it is better, but why put yourself under obligation to the hostess — "

"Nonsense! You must in everything be a practical man. They are, no doubt, extremely flattered — Servant!" he called out. "Ask for something to hang in front of the window, or it will blow here in the night."

Just then the old man came in to make the acquaintance of the officers. He blushed a little and, of course, did not fail to say that he was a friend of the late count, that he had enjoyed his favour, and even said that he more than once had been benefited by him. The old man did not stop to explain whether he meant by the benefits that the count had never paid him back the hundred roubles loaned to him, or that he had thrown him into a snow-drift, or that he had berated him. The count was exceedingly polite to the old cavalryman and thanked him for his visit.

"You must pardon us, count, for the absence of luxury" (he almost addressed him as "your Serenity," so unaccustomed had he become to keeping company with important personages). "Sister's house is rather small. But we will hang something here, and it will be all right," added the old man, and, under the pretext of fetching a curtain, but mainly in order to tell all he had found out from the officers, he scraped and left the room.

Pretty Ustyúshka came with the lady's shawl to screen

the window. Besides, the lady ordered her to ask if the gentlemen did not wish any tea.

The good housing apparently affected the count's disposition favourably: he smiled merrily, jested with Ustyúshka, so that Ustyúshka called him naughty; asked her whether the lady was good, and to her question whether they wished any tea replied that it would do no hurt to have some, that above everything else their supper was not yet ready, and that he would be obliged for some brandy, a little lunch, and some sherry if they had any.

The uncle was ecstatic from the young count's politeness and extolled to the sky the young generation of officers, saying that the men of the present were far superior to those of the past.

Anna Fédorovna did not agree with him, — there could be nothing better than Count Fédor Ivánovich, and finally became angry in earnest, dryly remarking: "For you, brother, he is best who was the last to show you any favour. Of course, people have now grown much more clever. Still, Count Fédor Ivánovich then danced the écossaise so exquisitely and was so amiable that all, one might say, were beside themselves looking at him, and he paid no attention to anybody else but me. Consequently, in old times there were nice people too."

At this time came the news of the request for brandy, a lunch, and sherry.

"Just like you, brother! You always do things wrong. You ought to have ordered a supper," said Anna Fédorovna. "Líza, give your order, my dear!"

Líza ran into the pantry for mushrooms and fresh butter, and the cook was ordered to make forcemeat cutlets.

"But how about the sherry? Brother, have you any left?"

"No, sister! I never had any."

"What, you have none? And what is it you drink with your tea?"

"That is rum, Anna Fédorovna."

"Isn't it all the same? Give that! Let it be rum! Would it not be better to invite them in here, brother? You know. I think they will not be offended."

The cavalryman informed her that he guaranteed that the count, in the kindness of his heart, would not refuse, and that he certainly would bring them. Anna Fédorovna went to put on, for some reason, her *gros* dress and new cap, while Líza was so busy that she had no time to take off her pink gingham dress with the broad sleeves which she had on. Besides, she was terribly agitated: it seemed to her that something striking was awaiting her, as though a low, black storm-cloud were hovering over her soul. This handsome hussar count appeared to her as an entirely new, incomprehensible to her, but beautiful being. His manner, his habit, his speech, — everything must be something quite unusual, such as she had never seen before. Everything he thought and said must be clever and true; everything he did must be honest; his whole exterior must be beautiful. She did not doubt it. If he had asked not a lunch and sherry, but a scented sage bath, she would not have been surprised, would not have complained to him, and would have been firmly convinced that that was right and proper.

The count consented at once when the cavalryman expressed to him his sister's wish. He combed his hair, put on his overcoat, and took his cigar-holder.

"Come," he said to Pólozov.

"Really, it will be better if we don't go," replied the cornet, "*ils feront des frais pour nous recevoir.*"

"Nonsense! It will make them happy. Besides, I have found out that there is a pretty daughter there. Come," said the count in French.

"*Je vous en prie, messieurs!*" said the cavalryman, to let them know that he knew French and understood what the officers had said.

XII.

Líza blushed and, lowering her eyes, pretended to be busy filling the teapot, being afraid to look at the officers as they entered the room. Anna Fédorovna, on the contrary, jumped up hurriedly, bowed, and, without taking her eyes off the count's face, began to talk to him, now finding an extraordinary resemblance to his father, now introducing her daughter, now offering tea, or jam, or country preserves. Nobody paid any attention to the cornet, on account of his modest appearance, and of this he was very glad, because, as far as propriety permitted, he watched and scrutinized in detail the beauty of Líza, which apparently had startled him very much.

The uncle, listening to his sister's conversation with the count, was waiting, with a speech ready upon his lips, for a chance of relating to them his cavalry reminiscences. The count at tea lighted a strong cigar, which made it hard for Líza to keep from coughing. He was very talkative and amiable. At first he interposed his stories in the intervals of Anna Fédorovna's unceasing speeches, and finally himself monopolized the conversation. There was one thing which affected his hearers a little strangely: in his stories he frequently employed words which were not regarded as improper in the society to which he belonged, but which here were somewhat bold, so that Anna Fédorovna was a little afraid, while Líza blushed up to her ears; but the count did not notice it, and was just as simply calm and amiable.

Líza silently filled the glasses. She did not hand the

glasses to them, but placed them near. She had not yet overcome her agitation and was eagerly listening to the speeches of the count. His unpretentious stories and the hesitation of his speech slowly calmed her. She did not hear from him the very clever things she had expected to hear from him, nor did she see that elegance in everything which she dimly had expected to find in him. Even at the third glass of tea, after her timid eyes had met his and he did not lower them, but, on the contrary, continued, barely smiling, to look calmly at her, she felt a little hostile toward him, and soon found that there was not only nothing especial in him, but that he in no way differed from all those whom she knew; that it was not worth while being afraid of him; that his nails, indeed, were long and clean, but that otherwise he was not at all handsome. Abandoning her dream not without internal sadness, Líza suddenly grew calm, and only the glance of the taciturn cornet, which she felt directed upon her, disquieted her. "Maybe it is this one and not that one," she thought.

XIII.

AFTER tea the old lady invited the guests to another room, and again sat down in her seat.

"Don't you wish to rest yourself, count?" she asked. "What can I do to entertain our dear guests with?" she continued, after a negative answer. "Do you play cards, count? If you, brother, could join us, we might start some kind of a game."

"You yourself play preference," replied the cavalryman, "so let us play together. Shall you play, count? And you, too?"

The officers expressed their willingness to do anything that would be agreeable to their kind hosts.

Líza brought from her room some old cards, with which she had been divining whether Anna Fédorovna's cold would soon pass, whether uncle would come back the same day from town, when he was away, whether a neighbour would call, and so forth. These cards, though they had been in service for something like two months, were cleaner than those which Anna Fédorovna had been using for her solitaire.

"Only you, probably, will not play at small stakes," said the uncle. "Anna Fédorovna and I play at half a kopek stakes — As it is, she always wins from us."

"Anything you wish — I am very glad to," replied the count.

"Well, then at a kopek in assignats! Let it be so much in honour of the dear guests: let them win from me, an old woman," said Anna Fédorovna, seating herself comfortably in her chair and spreading her mantilla.

"And maybe I shall win a rouble from them," thought Anna Fédorovna, who in her old age had acquired a small passion for cards.

"If you wish, I shall teach you to play with Tables and Miseres," said the count. "It is a jolly game!"

Everybody liked the new-fashioned St. Petersburg game. The uncle even assured him that he knew it, that it was the same as in boston, but that he had forgotten it a little. Anna Fédorovna did not understand a thing, and continued so long not understanding it that she felt herself compelled, smiling and approvingly nodding, to affirm that now she would understand, and that everything was at last clear to her. There was no small amount of laughter in the middle of the game, when Anna Fédorovna, with ace and a king blank, said Misere and was left with a six. She became confused, began timidly to smile and hurriedly to assure them that she was not yet quite used to the new game. Still, they scored against her, and a great deal, too, the more so since the count, accustomed to play a big, commercial game, played with reserve, calculated very well, and was entirely unable to understand the cornet's signs with the foot under the table and his terrible blunders in going whist.

Líza brought some more preserves, three kinds of jam, and Oporto apples of a peculiar pickling. She stopped behind her mother's back, looking at the game, and now and then watching the officers, especially the count's white hands, with their thin, pink, well-kept nails, as he firmly, prettily and with agility threw down cards and took in the stakes.

Anna Fédorovna, again hazarding to announce above the others, and, buying in seven, lost without three, and at her brother's demand, who monstrously represented some kind of a figure, was entirely at a loss and played hastily.

"Never mind, mamma; you will win back!" smilingly

said Líza, wishing to get her mother out of her ridiculous position. "Let uncle forfeit once, and then he will be caught."

"If you only helped me, Líza!" said Anna Fédorovna, looking at her daughter in fright. "I do not know how it is —"

"I can't play this way," said Líza, mentally counting her mother's forfeits. "You will lose a great deal in this fashion, mamma! There will be nothing left for a dress for Pímochka," she added, jestingly.

"In this way one may lose ten roubles in silver," said the cornet, looking at Líza, and wishing to enter into a conversation with her.

"Are you not playing with assignats?" Anna Fédorovna asked, looking at everybody.

"I do not know how it is, — I can't count by assignats," said the count. "How is it? What is an assignat?"

"Nowadays nobody any longer counts by assignats," interposed the uncle, who had been winning, playing with the flintstone.

The old woman ordered some frothy drink, herself emptied two beakers, grew red in her face, and, it seemed, submitted to fate. A strand of her gray hair strayed out from under her cap, and she did not even put it back. It evidently seemed to her that she had lost millions, and that she was completely lost.

The cornet ever more frequently pushed the count with his foot. The count noted down the old lady's forfeits. Finally the game came to an end. No matter how much the old lady, compromising with honesty, tried to add to her marks and to pretend that she was making mistakes in her calculations, and was unable to count it all up; however much she was horrified at the enormity of her loss, it turned out at the end, when the accounts were squared, that she had lost 920 points.

"Does this mean nine roubles in assignats?" Anna

Fédorovna asked several times, and failed to grasp the enormity of her loss, until her brother, to her terror, explained to her that she had lost thirty-two roubles and a half in assignats, and that she must by all means pay the amount.

The count did not even figure out his gain, but immediately after the game arose and walked over to the window, where Líza was setting the table for the appetizer, and taking mushrooms out of a jar and putting them on a plate for supper. He did in the calmest and simplest manner that which the cornet had wished to do all the evening, and was unable to do, — he entered into a conversation with her about the weather.

The cornet was, in the meanwhile, in a very unfortunate position. In the absence of the count, and, especially, of Líza, who had sustained her in her cheerful mood, Anna Fédorovna became frankly angry.

"Really it is aggravating to have made you lose so much," said Pólozov, to have something to say. "It is simply disgraceful."

"There they have invented Tables and Miseres! I can't play with them: how much does it come to in assignats?" she asked.

"Thirty-two roubles, thirty-two and a half," repeated the cavalryman, being, on account of his gain, in a playful mood. "Give us the money, sister! Give it to us!"

"I will give you all, only you will never catch me again, no! I sha'n't win it back in a lifetime."

Anna Fédorovna went with a rapid waddling gait to her room, came back, and brought with her nine roubles in assignats. Only at the urgent request of the old man did she pay everything she owed.

Pólozov was seized with a certain terror lest Anna Fédorovna should berate him if he said something to her. He silently and softly went away from her and joined the count and Líza, who were conversing at the open window.

Two tallow dips stood in the room on the table set for the supper. Their flames occasionally flickered in the fresh, warm breeze of the May night. The window which opened upon the garden was bright, but with a light entirely different from the one in the room. The almost full moon, losing its golden tinge, was swimming out above the tops of the tall lindens and ever more illuminated the white, thin clouds which now and then shrouded it. The frogs croaked in the pond, the surface of which, silvered in one place by the moon, could be seen through the avenue of trees. Some little birds softly hopped about and shook their wings in a fragrant lilac-bush, which occasionally slowly swayed its moist flowers under the very window.

"What charming weather!" said the count, walking over to Líza and seating himself on the low window-sill. "I suppose you walk a great deal?"

"Yes," replied Líza, for some reason no longer feeling the least embarrassment in conversing with the count. "In the morning, about seven o'clock, I walk out to look after the farm, and I go out for pleasure with Pímochka, mamma's protégée."

"It is a pleasure to live in the country!" said the count, putting his monocle in his eye, and looking now at the garden and now at Líza. "And don't you walk at night, in the moonlight?"

"No. But three years ago uncle and I walked every night when the moon was shining. He had a strange disease — insomnia. Whenever there was a full moon he could not fall asleep. His room is the one over there that faces the garden, and the window is low, so the moon just beat through it."

"That is strange," remarked the count. "But that is your room, I think?"

"No, but I shall stay there to-night, because you occupy my room."

"Indeed? O Lord, I will not forgive myself in all my life for having disturbed you," said the count, allowing the monocle to drop out of his eye in token of his genuine feeling. "If I had known that I was putting you out — "

"Not at all! On the contrary, I am very glad: uncle's room is so charming and cheerful; the window is low, and I will sit there until I fall asleep, or I will climb into the garden, and walk around in the night."

"What a charming girl!" the count thought, again adjusting his monocle. He looked at her, and, pretending to seat himself better on the sill, tried to touch her leg with his. "How cleverly she has hinted to me that I may see her in the garden near the window, if I wish." Líza lost the greater part of her charm for him, so easy did his victory over her appear to him.

"What a joy it must be," he said, thoughtfully looking at the dark avenues of trees, "to pass such a night in the garden with a being whom you love!"

Líza was a little embarrassed by these words, and by the repeated, as it were accidental, touching of her leg. Even before thinking, she said something, only that her embarrassment might not become apparent. She said, "Yes, it is glorious to walk about in the moonlight." She felt uncomfortable. She tied up the jar, from which she had taken out the mushrooms, and was getting ready to go away from the window, when the cornet went up to them. She wanted to know what kind of a man he was.

"What a charming night!" he said.

"All they talk about is the weather, I see," thought Líza.

"What a charming view!" continued the cornet. "I suppose you are tired of it," he added, following his peculiar bent toward telling somewhat unpleasant things to people to whom he took a special liking.

"Do you really think so? The same food, a dress, one gets tired of, but one will never tire of a garden, when

one is fond of walking through it, especially when the moon rises higher. From uncle's room the whole pond can be seen. I shall look at it to-night."

"It seems to me you have no nightingales here," said the count, very much displeased with Pólozov's company, who interfered with his finding out more positively the conditions of the rendezvous.

"We have always had them. Only last year the hunters caught one, and a week ago one sang out beautifully, but the country judge came by with the bells on his vehicle, and scared him away. Three years ago, uncle and I used to sit down in the covered avenue of trees and listen to them for two hours at a time."

"What is this prattling girl telling you?" asked the uncle, coming up to the speakers. "Won't you have a bit of something?"

After the supper, during which the count, by the praises bestowed upon the food, and by his appetite, managed somewhat to dispel the gloomy mood of the hostess, the officers bade them good night, and went to their room. The count pressed the uncle's hand, to the surprise of Anna Fédorovna, and her hand, without kissing it, and even Líza's hand, looking her straight in the eye and slightly smiling his pleasant smile. This glance again embarrassed the girl.

"He is very nice," she thought, "only he is too much interested in himself."

XIV.

"REALLY, are you not ashamed?" said Pólozov, when the officers returned to their room. "I tried on purpose to lose, and I kept pushing you under the table. Aren't you ashamed? The old woman was dreadfully put out about it."

The count laughed out loud.

"What a funny lady! How offended she was!"

He again laughed so merrily that even Johann, who was standing in front of him, lowered his eyes, and slightly smiled aside.

"And here is the son of the family's friend! Ha, ha, ha!" the count continued to smile.

"Really, it is not good. I was sorry for her," said the cornet.

"What nonsense! How young you are! Did you want me to lose? Why should I? I used to lose, when I did not know how to play. Ten roubles will be useful to me. You must look practically at life, or else you will always be left."

Pólozov grew silent. He wanted to think to himself of Líza, who appeared to him an unusually pure and beautiful being. He undressed himself and lay down in the soft and clean bed prepared for him.

"What nonsense these military honours and glory are!" he thought, looking at the window curtained with the shawl, through which stole the pale moonbeams. "It would be happiness to live in a quiet nook with a dear,

intelligent, simple wife, — yes, this is a lasting and a true happiness!"

For some reason or other he did not impart these meditations to his friend; he did not even mention the country maiden, although he was convinced that the count, too, was thinking of her.

"Why do you not undress yourself?" he asked the count, who was walking up and down in the room.

"I do not yet feel like sleeping. Put out the light if you want; I will find my bed without it."

He continued to pace up and down.

"I do not yet feel like sleeping," repeated Pólozov, feeling himself, after this evening, more than ever dissatisfied with the count's influence, and disposed to rebel against it. "I imagine," he reflected, mentally, turning to Túrbin, "what thoughts are rummaging through your well-groomed head! I saw that you took a liking to her. You are not capable of understanding this simple, honest creature: you need a Mína, and the epaulettes of a colonel. Truly I will ask him how he likes her."

Pólozov turned to him, but changed his mind: he felt that he not only should not be able to dispute with him, if the count's view of Líza was what he expected it to be, but that he should not even have the strength to disagree with him, so accustomed had he become to submit to his influence, which with every day became more oppressive and unjust.

"Where are you going?" he asked, when the count put on his cap and went toward the door.

"I will go to the stable to see whether everything is in order."

"That is strange," thought the cornet, but he put out the light, and, trying to dispel his stupidly jealous and hostile thoughts in respect to his friend, which beset him, he turned on his other side.

In the meantime Anna Fédorovna, crossing, and, as

usual, tenderly kissing her brother, her daughter, and adopted child, betook herself to her room. The old woman had for a long time not experienced so many impressions in one day, so that she was not able to pray in peace: the whole sadly vivid recollection of the late count and of the young dandy, who had won money from her in such a godless manner, did not leave her mind. Still, undressing herself by habit, and drinking half a glass of kvas, which stood on a little table near her bed, she lay down to sleep. Her favourite cat softly crept into the room. Anna Fédorovna called her up and began to stroke her; she listened to her purring, and could not fall asleep.

"The cat is bothering me," she thought, and drove her away. The cat fell softly to the floor, slowly turning her fluffy tail, and jumped on the bench. The maid who slept on the floor of this room brought her felt blanket, put out the candle, and lighted a small lamp. Soon the maid began to snore; but sleep did not come to Anna Fédorovna and did not soothe her disturbed imagination. Whenever she closed her eyes, the face of the hussar stood before her, and seemed to appear in all kinds of strange shapes every time when she with open eyes looked, in the dim light of the lamp, at the dresser, the table, and the white garments on the wall. Now she felt warm in her feather-bed; now the clock was striking annoyingly on the table, or the maid snoring dreadfully through her nose. Again her thoughts of her daughter, of the old and the young count, of the preference, became strangely mixed in her head. Now she saw herself dancing a waltz with the old count, saw her full, white shoulders, and felt upon them somebody's kisses, and then she saw her daughter in the embrace of the young count. Ustyúshka began to snore again —

"No, it is not that now, — not the same people. He was ready to go into the fire for me. And there was

cause for it. But this one, of course, sleeps like a fool, and is glad that he has won money from me, he does not even think of running after a woman. How the old count said on his knees: 'I will do anything you wish; I will kill myself, or I will do anything else you may ask me to!' and he would have killed himself, if I had told him to."

Suddenly somebody's bare feet were heard in the corridor, and Líza, with nothing but the kerchief over her, all pale and trembling, ran into the room, and almost fell on her mother's bed.

After having bid her mother good night, Líza went all alone to her uncle's room. She put on a jacket, put up her long, thick braid in a kerchief, extinguished the light, raised the window, and sat down with her feet on the chair, resting her dreamy eyes upon the pond, which now was all silvered over by the moon.

All her usual occupations and interests suddenly appeared to her in an entirely new light: her old capricious mother, the unreasoning love for whom had become part of her soul, the decrepit, but amiable uncle, the manorial servants, the peasants, who worshipped the young lady, the milch-cows, and the heifers, — all this so frequently dying and renovated Nature, amidst which she had grown up, loving others and loved by them, all which gave her such a light and pleasant soulful rest, — all this suddenly seemed different to her, — all this seemed dull and unnecessary, as though some one had said to her: "Foolish girl! Twenty years you have been acting foolishly, — you have served some one, for some purpose, and you did not know what life and happiness were!"

Peering into the depth of the bright, immovable garden, she now thought of it intently, much more intently than ever before. What was it that had induced these thoughts in her? Not at all a sudden love for the count, as one might be inclined to suppose. On the contrary, she did not like

him. The cornet might have interested her much more; but he was somehow foolish, wretched, taciturn. She involuntarily forgot him, and with anger and vexation evoked in imagination the picture of the count. "No, it is not that," she said to herself. Her ideal was so charming! It was an ideal which, amid this night, this Nature, without impairing its beauty, could be loved by her, — an ideal which had never been curtailed in order to weld it with some coarse reality.

At first, solitude and the absence of men, who might have attracted her attention, had had the effect of leaving in her heart whole and untarnished the whole power of love, which Providence has placed equally in the hearts of all of us; now she had been living too long with the melancholy happiness of feeling within her the presence of that something, and, now and then opening the mysterious vessel of the heart, of enjoying the contemplation of its riches, to pour forth unpremeditatedly upon some one all that there was within. God grant that she enjoy to her grave that scant happiness! Who knows whether it is not better and stronger? and whether it is not the only true and possible happiness?

"O Lord my God!" she thought, "have I really lost my happiness and youth for nothing? and will it not be — will it never be? Is it the truth?" and she peered into the high, bright heaven near the moon, covered with white, fleecy clouds, which, shrouding the little stars, were moving up toward the moon. "If the moon will be caught in this upper white cloudlet, it means that it is the truth," she thought. A mistlike smoky stripe scudded across the lower half of the bright moon, and slowly the light grew fainter on the grass, on the tops of the lindens, and on the pond: the black shadows of the trees became less noticeable. As though in harmony with the murky shadow, which veiled Nature, a light breeze was borne athwart the leaves and brought to the window the dewy

odour of leaves, of the moist earth, and of the blooming lilac.

"No, it is not true," she consoled herself, "but if the nightingale will sing to-night, then everything I have been thinking about is nonsense, and there is no cause for despair," she thought. And she sat for a long time in silence, waiting for some one, although everything was again refreshed and revived, and again cloudlets scudded across the moon several times, and all was merged in darkness. She was falling asleep, sitting at the window, when a nightingale awoke her with his frequent trills, sonorously borne over the surface of the pond. The country maiden opened her eyes. Again all her soul with full enjoyment was renovated in this mysterious union with Nature, which calmly and brightly extended in front of her. She leaned on both her arms. A pining, sweet sensation of sadness compressed her heart, and tears of a pure, broad love, thirsting to be satisfied, — good, consoling tears filled her eyes. She put down her arms upon the window-sill and lowered her head upon them. Her favourite prayer came to her soul of its own accord, and she dozed off with moist eyes.

The touch of somebody's hand awoke her. But the touch was gentle and agreeable. The hand pressed hers more strongly. She suddenly became conscious of reality, screamed, leaped up, and, assuring herself that she did not recognize the count, who was standing under the window, bathed in moonlight, ran out of the room.

XV.

INDEED, it was the count. Hearing the girl's scream, and the groan of the watchman beyond the fence, in response to this scream, he rushed headlong, with the sensation of a thief caught, over the damp, dew-covered grass into the depth of the garden. "Ah, what a fool I am!" he unconsciously repeated to himself. "I have frightened her. I ought to have done it more cautiously: I ought to have wakened her with words. Ah, what an awkward beast I am!"

He stopped to listen: the watchman went through the gate into the garden, trailing a stick over the sandy path. It was necessary for him to conceal himself. He ran down to the pond. The frogs hurriedly leaped into the water from underneath his feet, making him shudder. In spite of his wet feet, he here squatted down and began to recall all that he had done, — how he had climbed over the fence, how he had searched for her window, and how, at last, he espied her white shadow; how, listening to the least rustling sound, he went up to the window and walked back again; now it seemed to him beyond any doubt that she was waiting for him, annoyed at his slowness, and now again that it was impossible that she should have so easily appointed a meeting. At last he concluded that she, with the embarrassment of a provincial lady, only pretended to be asleep, and walked over to her with determination and clearly saw her situation, but for some reason rushed headlong back, and, shaming himself for such a display of cowardice, went boldly up to her and touched her hand.

The watchman again made a noise and, causing the gate to creak, went out of the garden. The window of the young lady's room was slammed to and was closed with a shutter from within. It annoyed the count very much to see this done. He would have given much if it had been possible to begin everything anew: he would not act so stupidly again. "She is a charming young lady! So fresh! Simply exquisite! How I have missed my chance — I am a stupid beast!" He no longer felt like sleeping, and so he strode with the determined steps of an angered man at haphazard ahead of him, over a path of the bowery linden avenue.

Here the night brought to him its peace-bearing gifts of soothing melancholy and necessity of love. The clayey path, with here and there a sprouting grass blade or dry stick, was lighted up in circles, through the dense foliage of the lindens, by the direct, pale moonbeams. Some bent twig, as though overgrown with white moss, shone toward one side. The leaves, silvered over, now and then whispered. In the house the lights were out, and all sounds had died down; only the nightingale seemed with his song to fill all the immeasurable, silent, and illuminated space.

"O God, what a night! What a charming night!" thought the count, inhaling the fragrant freshness of the night. "I am sorry for something, as though dissatisfied with myself and with others, and with life in general — " Here his reveries became mixed: he imagined himself in this garden with the provincial young lady in various, very strange attitudes; then the rôle of a lady was taken up by his dear Mína. "What a fool I am! I ought to have just clasped her waist and kissed her."

With this regret the count returned to his room. The cornet was not yet asleep. He immediately turned his face to the count.

"Are you not asleep?" asked the count.

"No."

"Shall I tell you what has happened?"

"Well?"

"No, I had better not tell — or yes, I will. Pull up your legs!"

The count, mentally dismissing the spoiled intrigue, with an animated smile sat down on the bed of his comrade.

"Would you believe it? The young lady appointed a rendezvous with me."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Pólozov, jumping up from his bed.

"Well, listen!"

"How was it? When? Impossible!"

"While you people were counting the preference, she told me that she would be sitting at the window in the night, and that one could climb in through the window. You see what it means to be a practical man! While you were casting accounts with the old woman, I arranged this matter. Did you not hear her say in your presence that she would be sitting in the night at the window and looking at the pond?"

"Yes, she did say that."

"I do not know whether she said that accidentally or not. Maybe she did not want to do it all at once, only it looked like it. It turned out to be a terrible thing. I acted a complete fool!" he added, smiling contemptuously at himself.

"How so? Where were you?"

The count told everything that had happened, except his preliminary indecisive attempts.

"I spoiled it myself: I ought to have [illegible]lder. She screamed and ran away from the [illegible]"

"So she screamed and ran away," said the cornet, with an awkward smile, in response to the count's smile, which made a strong and lasting impression upon him.

MEMORIA[illegible]NARLA

"Yes. Now it is time to go to bed."

The cornet again turned his back to the door and lay for ten minutes in silence. God knows what took place in his soul; but when he turned around again, his face expressed suffering and determination.

"Count Túrbin!" he said, in a halting voice.

"What is the matter with you? Are you delirious?" calmly replied the count. "What is it, Cornet Pólozov?"

"Count Túrbin, you are a scoundrel!" cried Pólozov, and jumped up from his bed.

XVI.

On the following day the squadron departed. The officers did not see their hosts and did not bid them farewell. Nor did they speak to each other. Upon arriving at the first day's halt it was proposed to have a duel. But Captain Schulz, a good fellow, an excellent horseman, the favourite of everybody in the regiment, and having been selected by the count to be his second, so managed to arrange matters that not only was there no duel, but no one in the regiment ever knew anything about the affair. Túrbin and Pólozov, although no longer abiding in their former amicable relations, kept addressing each other as "thou" and met at dinners and at parties.

ALBERT

A Story

1857

ALBERT

A Story

I.

FIVE rich young men arrived in the third hour of the night to enjoy themselves at a small St. Petersburg party.

A great deal of champagne was drunk. The greater number of the gentlemen were very young; the maidens were beautiful; the piano and violin indefatigably played one polka after another, the dances and the din never stopped; but it was somehow dull and awkward. Everybody felt, as often happens, that it all was not the right thing, and that it was unnecessary.

They tried several times to heighten the merriment, but the forced merriment was even worse than the ennui.

One of the five young men, more than the rest dissatisfied with himself, and the others, and the whole evening, rose with a feeling of disgust, found his hat, and went out with the intention of leaving without being noticed.

There was no one in the antechamber, but in the adjoining room, behind the door, he heard two altercating voices.

"You can't, there are guests there," said a feminine voice.

"Let me, please. I won't do anything!" implored a feeble masculine voice.

"I will not let you without the madame's permission," said the woman. "Where are you going? Oh, what a man!"

The door opened wide, and on the threshold appeared a strange figure of a man. Upon noticing a guest, the maid no longer held him back, and the strange figure, bowing timidly, staggering on his bent legs, entered the room. It was a middle-sized man, with a narrow, stooping back and long, dishevelled hair. He wore a short overcoat and torn, tight pantaloons over rough, uncleaned boots. The necktie, twisted into the shape of a rope, wound around his long white neck. A dirty shirt stuck out from the sleeves over lean hands. Yet, in spite of the extraordinary leanness of the body, his face was tender and white, and a fresh ruddiness lay on the cheeks above the scanty black beard and side whiskers. The uncombed hair, thrown up, revealed a low and exceedingly clear forehead. His dark, fatigued eyes looked softly, imploringly, and, at the same time, earnestly ahead of him. Their expression captivatingly blended with the expression of the fresh lips, bent at the corners, which could be seen back of the scanty moustache.

Having made a few steps, he stopped, turned around to the young man, and smiled. He smiled as though with difficulty; but when the smile brightened up his face, the young man — himself not knowing why — smiled too.

"Who is that?" he asked the maid in a whisper, when the strange figure had entered the room from which came the sounds of dancing music.

"A demented musician from the theatre," replied the maid. "He sometimes calls on the lady of the house."

"Where did you go to, Delésov?" some one just then called out in the parlour.

The young man, who was named Delésov, returned to the parlour.

The musician was standing at the door and, looking at the dancers, by his smile, his look, and the tapping of his foot expressed the satisfaction which this spectacle afforded him.

"Well, go and dance yourself," one of the guests said to him.

The musician bowed and looked interrogatively at the hostess.

"Go, go, the gentlemen want you to," interposed the hostess.

The lean, feeble limbs of the musician suddenly came into intensified motion, and he, winking, smiling, and jerking, began heavily and awkwardly to leap about in the room. In the middle of the quadrille, a merry officer, who was dancing beautifully and with animation, accidentally hit the musician with his back. The feeble, tired legs did not keep their balance, and the musician, having made a few swaying steps toward one side, fell his whole length upon the floor. Notwithstanding the dull, dry sound produced by his fall, nearly all at first burst out laughing.

But the musician did not get up. The guests grew silent, even the piano ceased playing, and Delésov and the hostess were the first to run up to the prostrate man. He was lying on his elbow and staring with a dull expression at the floor. When he was picked up and placed on a chair, he with a quick motion of his bony hand brushed aside the hair from his brow and began to smile, without answering any question.

"Mr. Albert! Mr. Albert!" said the hostess. "Are you hurt? Where? I said he ought not to dance, — he is so feeble!" she continued, addressing her guests. "He barely stands up, so how can he?"

"Who is he?" they asked the hostess.

"A poor man, — an artist. A very good fellow, only wretched, as you see."

She said this, not at all embarrassed by the presence of the musician. The musician came to and, as though frightened at something, curled all up and brushed aside the people standing near him.

"All this is nothing," he suddenly said, with obvious effort rising from his chair.

To prove that he was not hurt, he walked into the middle of the room and wanted to jump up, but staggered, and would have fallen again, if he had not been held up.

All felt ill at ease; they looked at him and kept silent.

The musician's look again became dimmed, and he, apparently forgetting all, rubbed his knee with his hand. Suddenly he raised his head, put forward his trembling foot, with the same trite gesture as before threw back his hair, and, walking up to the violinist, took his violin.

"All this is nothing!" he repeated once more, swinging the violin. "Gentlemen, we shall have music now."

"What a strange face!" the guests said to each other.

"Maybe a great talent is perishing in this unfortunate creature!" said one of the guests.

"Yes, he is miserable, miserable!" said another.

"What a beautiful face! There is something extraordinary in him," said Delésov. "We shall see — "

II.

In the meantime Albert, paying no attention to any one, pressed the violin to his shoulder and slowly walked up and down near the piano, tuning it. His lips were curved into an impassionate expression, his eyes could not be seen; but his narrow, bony back, his long, white neck, his crooked legs and shaggy black head presented a queer, but for some reason not laughable, spectacle. Having tuned the violin, he briskly struck a chord and, tossing up his head, turned to the pianist, who was getting ready to play his accompaniment.

"*Mélancolie G-dur!*" he said, turning with an imperative gesture to the pianist.

Soon after, as though begging pardon for his imperative gesture, he smiled meekly, and with this smile surveyed the audience. Throwing back his hair with the hand in which he held the bow, he stopped at the corner of the piano and touched the strings with a flowing motion of his bow. A clear, melodious sound passed through the room, and all grew silent.

The notes of the theme flowed freely, artistically, after the first chord, suddenly illuminating the inner world of each hearer with some unexpectedly clear and soothing light. Not one false or extravagant sound impaired the submissiveness of the listeners: all the notes were clear, artistic, and significant. Everybody followed their evolution in silence, with a trepidation of hope. From a condition of ennui, of noisy distraction, and of the soul's sleep, in which these people were, they were suddenly

imperceptibly transferred into an entirely different, forgotten world.

Now there arose in their souls the contemplation of the past, of an impassioned recollection of some happiness, of an unlimited desire for power and splendour, of a feeling of humility, of unsatisfied love and sadness. Now the sadly tender and the impulsively despairing sounds, freely intermingling, flowed and flowed one after another so artistically, so strongly, and so unconsciously, that it was not the notes that were heard, but a beautiful stream of a long familiar, but now for the first time expressed, poetry, that flowed of its own accord into the soul of each.

With every note Albert grew out taller and taller. He was far from being misshapen or strange. Pressing down the violin with his chin and listening to his notes with the expression of impassioned attention, he convulsively changed the position of his feet. Now he would straighten himself up to his full stature, and now again he would carefully bend his back. His left, tensely bent hand seemed to have congealed in its place, and only the bony fingers convulsively moved over the strings; his right moved smoothly, artistically, imperceptibly. His face was agleam with an uninterrupted, ecstatic joy; his eyes burned with a bright, dry splendour, his nostrils were expanded, his red lips opened through sheer enjoyment.

Occasionally the head bent nearer to the violin, his eyes closed, and his face, half-covered by his hair, was lighted up with a smile of humble bliss. Occasionally he suddenly straightened himself up, put forward a foot, and his clear brow and shining look, which he cast upon the room, gleamed with pride, with majesty, with the consciousness of power. Once the pianist made a mistake and took a wrong chord. Physical suffering was expressed in the whole figure and face of the musician. He stopped for a second and, with an expression of malice, stamping

his foot, he exclaimed: "*Moll, ce moll!*" The pianist corrected himself, Albert closed his eyes, smiled, and, again forgetting himself, and others, and the whole world, blissfully abandoned himself to his work.

All those who were present in the room during Albert's playing preserved a submissive silence and seemed to live and breathe only by his sounds.

The merry officer sat motionless on a chair near the window, directing a lifeless glance upon the floor, and occasionally drawing a laboured breath. The maidens sat in absolute silence along the walls, and only rarely cast approving, nay, perplexed, glances at each other. The fat, smiling face of the hostess melted with joy. The pianist riveted his eyes upon Albert's face and, for fear of making a mistake, which found its expression in his stretched form, tried to keep up with him.

One of the guests, who had drunk more than the rest, lay with face downward upon a divan and tried not to move in order not to betray his agitation. Delésov experienced an unusual sensation. A cold circle, now compressing, now expanding, held his head as in a vice. The roots of his hair became sensitive; a chill ran up his spine; something seemed to rise higher and higher in his throat, stinging his nose and palate as though with needles, and tears imperceptibly moistened his cheeks. He shook himself, tried unnoticed to draw them in again and wipe them, but new ones came out again and coursed down his face.

By a strange concatenation of impressions, the first sounds of Albert's violin transferred Delésov to his first youth. He — no longer a young man, tired of life, an exhausted man — suddenly felt himself a seventeen-year-old, self-contentedly pretty, blissfully stupid, and unconsciously happy being. He recalled his first love for his cousin in a pink little dress; he recalled his first confession in the linden avenue; he recalled the heat and the

incomprehensible charm of the first kiss; he recalled the magic and unsolved mysteriousness of the Nature that then surrounded him. In his retrospective imagination, *she* gleamed through the mist of indefinite hopes, incomprehensible desires, and unquestioned faith in the possibility of an impossible happiness. All the unappreciated minutes of that time, one after another, arose before him, but not as insignificant moments of a fleeting present, but as arrested, expanding, reprobating forms of the past. He contemplated them with joy and wept, — he wept not because the time had passed which he might have employed to better advantage (if that time were given back to him, he would not undertake to make better use of it), but because that time was past and would never return.

The recollections arose of their own accord, and Albert's violin kept saying one and the same thing. It said: "Past is the time for you, for ever past the time of strength, of love, and of happiness, past, — and it shall never return. Weep for it, weep all your tears, die in the tears for that time, — this is the one, best happiness which is left for you."

Toward the end of the last variation Albert's face became red; his eyes burned, without growing dim; large drops of perspiration coursed down his cheeks. The veins on his brow were swollen; his whole body came into an ever increasing motion; the pale lips no longer closed up, and his whole figure expressed an ecstatic eagerness of enjoyment.

Making a desperate flourish with his whole body and tossing his hair, he took down his violin and with a smile of proud majesty and happiness surveyed the audience. Then his back became bent, his lips were folded, his eyes were dimmed, and he, as though ashamed of himself, looking timidly about him and stumbling, went into another room.

III.

SOMETHING strange took place with all the persons present, and something strange was felt in the dead silence which ensued after Albert's play. It was as though each wanted to express what all this meant, but could not. What is meant by a bright and warm room, brilliant women, the dawn in the windows, agitated blood, and the pure impression of fleeting sound? Nobody attempted to say what all this meant; on the contrary, nearly all, feeling themselves incapable of passing entirely over to the side of that which the new impression had revealed to them, were provoked against it.

"He really plays beautifully," said the officer.

"Wonderfully," replied Delésov, stealthily wiping off his cheeks with his sleeve.

"Gentlemen, it is about time to depart," said, adjusting himself a little, the one who was lying on the divan. "We ought to give him something, gentlemen! Let us take up a collection!"

Albert was in the meantime sitting alone, in the other room, upon a couch. Leaning with his elbows on his bony knees, he stroked his face with his perspiring, dirty hands, dishevelled his hair, and smiled a happy smile to himself.

They took up a good collection, and Delésov offered to take it to him.

Besides, it had occurred to Delésov, upon whom the music had produced such a strong and unusual impression, to do the man some good. It occurred to him that

he could take him to his rooms, dress him up, find some place for him, — in general, tear him away from his sordid position.

"Well, are you tired?" asked Delésov, walking into the room where he was. Albert smiled.

"You have real talent; you ought to make a serious matter of music; you ought to play in public."

"I should like to have a drink of something," said Albert, as though awakening.

Delésov brought him wine, and the musician eagerly emptied two glasses.

"What excellent wine!" he said.

"Melancholy, what a superb thing it is!" said Delésov.

"Oh, yes, yes!" Albert replied, smiling. "But excuse me: I do not know with whom I have the honour of speaking; you may be a count, or a prince; can't you loan me some money?" He was silent for a moment. "I have none — I am a poor man. I cannot return it to you."

Delésov blushed; he felt awkward, and he hastened to give the musician the collection.

"Thank you very much," said Albert, grasping the money. "Now let us have music: I will play for you as much as you wish. Only let me have something to drink, something to drink," he added, rising.

Delésov brought him some more wine and asked him to sit down near him.

"Excuse me for being frank with you," said Delésov, "your talent has interested me so much. It seems to me that you are not in a good position."

Albert looked now at Delésov, and now at the hostess, who had entered the room.

"Permit me to offer you my services," continued Delésov. "If you are in need of anything, I should be very happy if you took up your abode with me. I live all alone, and I might be useful to you."

Albert smiled and made no reply.

"Why don't you express your thanks?" said the hostess. "Of course, this would be an advantage for you. Only, I should not advise you," she continued, turning to Delésov and giving a negative shake with her head.

"I am much obliged to you," said Albert, pressing Delésov's hands with his clammy hands, "but let us have music now, if you please."

The other guests were getting ready to leave and, no matter how much Albert begged them to stay, went out into the antechamber.

Albert bade the hostess good-bye and, putting on his shabby broad-brimmed hat and old summer cape, which was the only winter wrap he had, went out on the porch with Delésov.

When Delésov seated himself with his new acquaintance in the carriage and smelled that unpleasant odour of intoxication and uncleanliness, with which this musician was saturated, he began to regret his act and to accuse himself of a childish softness of heart and lack of common sense. Besides, everything which Albert said was so stupid and trite, and he suddenly became so dirtily drunk in the air, that Delésov was nauseated. "What am I going to do with him?" he thought.

After travelling fifteen minutes, Albert grew silent; his hat fell down to his feet, and he threw himself down in the corner of the carriage and began to snore. The wheels creaked evenly over the frosty snow; the feeble light of the dawn barely penetrated through the frozen windows.

Delésov looked at his neighbour. His long body, covered with the cape, lay lifelessly near him. It seemed to Delésov that the long head with the large, dark nose was shaking on that body; but, upon looking more closely, he saw that that which he had taken for a nose and face was hair, and the real face was lower down. He bent over

and made out the features of Albert's face. The beauty of the brow and of the calmly shut mouth again startled him.

Under the influence of his tired nerves, of the irritating sleepless morning hour, and of the music which he had heard, Delésov, looking at that face, again was transferred to that blissful world into which he had taken a glance that same night; again he thought of the happy and magnanimous time of youth, and he stopped regretting his deed. At that moment he sincerely, warmly loved Albert and firmly intended to do him some good.

IV.

On the following morning, when he was awakened to go to his office, Delesov, in disagreeable surprise, saw before him the same old screen, the same old servant, and the watch on the little table. "What else is it that I should like to see, if it is not that which always surrounds me?" he asked himself. He then recalled the black eyes and the happy smile of the musician; the motive of the "melancholy" and the whole strange previous night passed through his imagination.

He had no time to consider whether he had acted right or wrong in taking with him the musician. As he dressed himself, he mentally apportioned his day; he took his documents, gave the necessary orders about the house, and hurriedly put on his overcoat and galoshes. As he passed the dining-room, he looked in through the door. Albert, spreading out in his dirty and torn shirt, with his face stuck in a pillow, was sleeping the sleep of the dead on a morocco leather divan, where he had been placed the night before. "Something is wrong," was the thought that involuntarily occurred to Delésov.

"Please go down to Boryuzóvski and ask for his violin for two or three days. I want it for him," he said, to his servant. "When he wakes up, give him coffee and let him put on some of my underwear and old clothes. In general, satisfy his wishes, if you please."

Upon returning home late in the evening, Delésov, to his surprise, did not find Albert.

"Where is he?" he asked his servant.

"He went away directly after dinner," replied the servant. "He took the violin and went away. He promised to be back in an hour, but has not yet shown up."

"Tut, tut, this is annoying!" said Delésov. "How could you let him go, Zákhar?"

Zákhar was a St. Petersburg lackey, who had been for eight years in Delésov's service. Being a lonely bachelor, Delésov involuntarily confided to him his intentions, and liked to know his opinion in regard to each of his undertakings.

"How could I dare not let him?" replied Zákhar, playing with the fob of his watch. "If you had told me, Dmítri Ivánovich, to keep him, I might have been able to hold him at home. But you only said something about his garments."

"Tut! This is annoying! Well, what was he doing here without me?"

Zákhar smiled.

"Really, he may be called an artist, Dmítri Ivánovich. When he awoke he asked for Madeira; then he passed all the time with the cook and with the neighbour's servant. He is so funny. Still, he has a good character. I gave him tea and brought him dinner; but he did not want to eat, and invited me in. But when it comes to playing the violin, you will find few such artists at Isler's. It is worth while keeping such a man. As he played 'Down the Mother Vólga' for us, it was as though a man were weeping. It was too good! People came from all the stories to our vestibule to listen to him."

"Well, did you dress him up?" his master interrupted him.

"Of course. I gave him your nightshirt and put my overcoat on him. It is proper to help such a man, he is such a dear fellow!" Zákhar smiled. "He kept asking me what your rank was and whether you had influential acquaintances, and how many souls of peasants you had."

"All right, but we must find him now, and never again give him anything to drink, or you will only make him worse."

"That is true," interposed Zákhar. "He is evidently feeble; our master had just such a clerk — "

Delésov, who had long known the story of the desperately drinking clerk, did not give Zákhar a chance to finish his story, and, ordering everything fixed for the night, sent him out to find Albert and bring him back.

He lay down in his bed, put out the light, but could not fall asleep for a long time, thinking of Albert. "Although this may appear very strange to many of my acquaintances," thought Delésov, "it is so seldom that one does something for somebody else that one ought to thank God when an opportunity presents itself, and I will not miss it. I will do everything, absolutely everything I can in order to aid him. Maybe he is not at all insane, but only a drunkard. This will not cost me very much: where one has enough to eat, two may have. Let him first live with me, and then we will find him a place or will arrange a concert for him; we will pull him off the shallow, and then we shall see."

A pleasant feeling of self-satisfaction took possession of him after this reflection.

"Really, I am not an entirely bad man, not at all a bad man," he thought. "I am positively a very good man if I compare myself with others — "

He was falling asleep, when the sounds of an opening door and of steps in the antechamber distracted him.

"Well, I will treat him a little more severely," he thought. "That will be better; I must do so."

He rang the bell.

"Well, has he come?" he asked Zákhar, who came in.

"He is a wretched man, Dmítri Ivánovich," said Zákhar, significantly shaking his head and closing his eyes.

"Well, is he drunk?"

"He is very weak."

"Has he the violin with him?"

"Yes, the lady gave it to me."

"Please do not let him in here! Put him to bed, and to-morrow don't let him out under any consideration."

Zákhar had not yet gone away, when Albert entered the room.

V.

"You want to sleep?" asked Albert, smiling. "I was there, at Anna Iványovna's. I passed a very pleasant evening: we had music, and we laughed, and had pleasant company. Permit me to drink a glass of something," he added, taking hold of the water-bottle, which was standing on the table, "anything but water."

Albert was just as he was the night before: there was the same beautiful smile in his eyes and on his lips, the same bright, inspired brow and feeble limbs. Zákhar's overcoat fitted him well, and the clean, long, unstarched collar of the nightshirt picturesquely encircled his thin white neck, giving him a peculiarly childlike and innocent aspect. He sat down on Delésov's bed and looked at him in silence, with a joyous and grateful smile. Delésov looked into Albert's eyes, and suddenly again felt himself in the power of his smile. His sleepiness vanished; he forgot that it was his duty to be severe; on the contrary, he wanted to make merry, to listen to music, and to talk in a friendly way with Albert until morning, if possible. Delésov ordered Zákhar to bring a bottle of wine, cigarettes, and the violin.

"That is excellent," said Albert. "It is early yet, and we will have music. I will play for you as much as you please."

Zákhar with apparent pleasure brought a bottle of Lafitte, two glasses, weak cigarettes, which Albert smoked, and the violin; but, instead of going to bed himself, as

his master had ordered him to, he lighted a cigar and sat down in the adjoining room.

"Let us talk together," Delésov said to the musician, as he took the violin.

Albert submissively sat down on the bed and again smiled joyfully.

"Ah, yes!" he said, suddenly striking his brow with his hand and assuming a careworn and curious expression. (The expression of his face always preceded that which he was about to say.) "Permit me to ask you" — he hesitated awhile — "that gentleman who was with you last night, and whom you called N——, is he not the son of the famous N——?"

"His son," replied Delésov, unable to understand how that could interest Albert.

"That's it," he said, with a self-satisfied smile. "I at once noticed something peculiarly aristocratic in his manners. I love aristocrats: there is something beautiful and elegant in an aristocrat. And that officer who danced so well," he asked, "I liked him very much, too, — he was so jolly and so noble. He is Adjutant S——, I think?"

"Which one?" asked Delésov.

"The one that knocked against me as we danced. He must be a very fine fellow."

"No, he is an empty-headed man," replied Delésov.

"Oh, no," Albert warmly defended him. "There is something very, very pleasant about him. He is a fine musician," added Albert. "He played there something from an opera. I have not taken such a liking to any one for a long time."

"Yes, he plays well, but I do not like his manner of playing," said Delésov, wishing to lead his interlocutor to a conversation on music. "He does not understand classical music; Donizetti and Bellini are not music. You are, no doubt, of the same opinion."

"Oh, no, no, pardon me," said Albert, with a soft, interceding expression, "the old music is music, and so is the new. There are extraordinary beauties in the new music. What about 'Sonnambula'? and the finale in 'Lucia'? and Chopin? and 'Roberto'? I often think" — he stopped, apparently collecting his thoughts — "that if Beethoven were alive he would weep for joy listening to 'Sonnambula.' There are beauties everywhere. I heard 'Sonnambula' for the first time when Viardot and Rubini were here, — it was like this," he said, with glistening eyes, making a gesture with both his hands, as though tearing something out of his breast. "A little longer, and it would have been impossible to endure it."

"And how do you find the opera now?" asked Delésov.

"Bosio is good, very good," he replied, "extremely elegant; but she does not touch here," he said, pointing to his sunken breast. "A singer needs passion, and she has none. She gives pleasure, but does not torment you."

"Well, and Lablache?"

"I heard him in Paris in the 'Barber of Seville;' then he was unexcelled, but now he is old, — he cannot be an artist, he is old."

"Even though he is old, he is good in *morceaux d'ensemble*," said Delésov, who always said that of Lablache.

"Even though he is old?" Albert retorted, severely. "He must not be old. An artist must not be old. Much is needed for art, but above everything else fire!" he said, with glistening eyes, uplifting both his hands.

Indeed, a terrible internal fire was burning in his whole figure.

"Ah, my God!" he suddenly exclaimed, "do you not know Petróv, the artist?"

"No, I don't," Delésov replied, smiling.

"How I wish you would make his acquaintance! You would find pleasure in speaking with him. How well he, too, understands art! We used to meet often at Anna Ivánovna's, but she is now for some reason angry with him. I am very anxious for you to know him. He has great, great talent."

"What does he do, paint?" asked Delésov.

"I do not know. I think not; but he was an artist of the Academy. What ideas he has! It is wonderful to hear him speak sometimes. Oh, Petróv is a great genius, but he leads too merry a life — It is a pity," added Albert, smiling. After that he arose from the bed, took the violin, and began to tune it.

"How long is it since you were last at the opera?" Delésov asked him.

Albert looked around him and sighed.

"Ah, I can't," he said, clasping his head. He again sat down near Delésov. "I will tell you," he muttered, almost in a whisper: "I can't go there, I can't play there, — I have nothing, nothing! I have no clothes, no lodging, no violin. It is a miserable life! a miserable life!" he repeated several times, "and why should I go there? Why? No, I must not," he said, smiling. "Ah, 'Don Juan'!"

He struck his head with his hand.

"We shall sometimes go there together," said Delésov.

Without making any reply, Albert leaped up, grasped the violin, and began to play the finale of the first act of "Don Juan," in his way telling the contents of the opera.

Delésov's hair began to stir on his head, as he played the voice of the dying commander.

"No, I cannot play to-day," he said, putting down the viclin, "I have been drinking too much."

But immediately after he walked over to the table, poured out a full glass of wine for himself, gulped it

down, and again seated himself on the bed near Delésov.

Delésov looked at Albert, without taking his eyes off him. Occasionally Albert smiled, and so did Delésov. They were both silent; but in their looks and smiles there grew up an ever closer relation of love. Delésov felt that he loved that man more and more, and he experienced an inexpressible joy. "Have you been in love?" he suddenly asked him.

Albert fell to musing for a few seconds, then his face was lighted up by a melancholy smile. He bent down to Delésov, and looked him attentively in the eye.

"Why did you ask me that?" he muttered, in a whisper. "I will tell you everything, because I like you," he continued, looking awhile at him and casting side glances. "I will not deceive you, but will tell you all from the beginning just as it was." He stopped, and his eyes stopped in a strange and wild manner. "You know that I am weak of intellect," he suddenly said. "Yes, yes," he continued, "Anna Ivánovna, no doubt, has told you so. She tells everybody that I am insane! That is not so. She says it as a joke, — she is a good woman, — though it is true I have not been quite well for some time." Albert again grew silent and looked at the dark door with arrested, widely open eyes. "You asked me whether I ever was in love. Yes, I was," he whispered, raising his eyebrows. "It happened long ago, at the time when I was still connected with the theatre. I played second violin at the opera, and she used to come to a lettered parterre stall on the left."

Albert got up and bent down to Delésov's ear.

"No, there is no reason for giving her name," he said. "You, no doubt, know her, — everybody does. I was silent and only looked at her. I knew that I was a poor artist, and she an aristocratic lady. I knew it very well. I only looked at her, thinking nothing."

Albert became meditative at this recollection.

"I do not remember how it happened; but I was once called to her house to accompany her on the violin — I, poor artist!" he said, shaking his head and smiling. "No, I can't tell it, I can't — " he added, clasping his head. "How happy I was!"

"Well, did you often go there?" asked Delésov.

"Once, only once — but it was my own fault. I lost my mind. I, poor artist, and she, an aristocratic lady. I ought not to have said anything to her. But I lost my mind, I did foolish things. Since then everything has been lost for me. Petróv told me the truth: it would have been better to see her in the theatre only — "

"What was it you did?" asked Delésov.

"Ah, wait, wait, I cannot tell it."

He covered his face with his hands, and was silent for some time.

"I came late to the orchestra. Petróv and I had been drinking that evening, and I was distracted. She was sitting in her box, and talking to a general. I do not know who that general was. She sat at the very edge, and had placed her hand on the balustrade; she wore a white dress and pearls around her neck. She spoke with him and looked at me. Her hair was made up like this. I was not playing, but standing near the bass and watching. It was then that I for the first time felt strange. She smiled at the general and looked at me. I felt that she was speaking about me, and suddenly I saw that I was not in the orchestra, but in her box and holding her hand, like this. What is this?" asked Albert, growing silent.

"This is vividness of imagination," said Delésov.

"No, no — I do not know how to tell it," Albert replied, frowning. "I was poor even then; I had no lodging, and when I went to the theatre, I generally remained there overnight."

"What? In the theatre? In the dark, empty hall?"

"Ah, I am not afraid of these foolish things. Ah, wait! As soon as they had all gone away, I would go to the box which she used to occupy, and there I would sleep. This was my one joy. What nights I passed there! But once it started again. Many things appeared to me in the night, — I cannot tell you all." Albert looked at Delésov, with his pupils lowered. "What is it?" he asked.

"It is strange!" said Delésov.

"No, wait, wait!" He continued to tell him the rest in a whisper, bending over his ear. "I kissed her hand; I wept by her side; I talked much with her; I inhaled the odour of her perfume; I heard her voice. She told me much one night. Then I took my violin and began to play softly. I played superbly. But I felt terribly I am not afraid of these foolish things, and do not believe in them; but I felt terribly about my head," he said, with a sweet smile, and touching his brow with his hand. "I felt terribly for my poor intellect; I thought that something had happened to my head. Maybe that is nothing, — what do you say?"

Both were silent for awhile.

"'Und wenn die Wolken sie verhüllen,
Die Sonne bleibt doch ewig klar,'"

Albert sang out, smiling softly. "Is it not so?" he added.

"'Ich auch habe gelebt und genossen.'

Ah! how well old Petróv could have explained it all to you!"

Delésov in silence and terror looked at the agitated and pale face of his interlocutor.

"Do you know the 'Juristen-walzer'?" suddenly ex-

claimed Albert, and, without waiting for a reply, he jumped up, seized his violin, and began to play a merry waltz. Forgetting himself completely, and apparently imagining that a whole orchestra was playing with him, Albert smiled, swayed, changed the position of his feet, and played magnificently.

"Pshaw, enough of merrymaking!" he said, finishing and swinging his violin.

"I will go," he said, after sitting silently for awhile. "Won't you go?"

"Whither?" Delésov asked, in surprise.

"Let us go again to Anna Ivánovna's; it is jolly there: there is a noise, people, music."

Delésov in the first moment almost consented. But, considering the matter, he began to persuade Albert not to go there that day.

"Only for a minute."

"Really, don't go!"

Albert sighed and put down the violin.

"So I had better stay here?"

He looked again at the table (there was no wine there) and went out, wishing him a good night.

Delésov rang the bell. "Be sure and don't let Mr. Albert out anywhere without my special order," he said to Zákhar.

VI.

THE following day was a holiday. Delésov, after waking, sat in his drawing-room at the coffee and read a book. Albert in the next room was not yet stirring.

Zákhar cautiously opened the door into the dining-room and looked in.

"Would you believe it, Dmítri Ivánovich, he is sleeping on the bare couch! He did not want anything put under, upon my word. Like a little child. Truly, an artist."

At noon groaning and coughing were heard behind the door.

Zákhar again went into the dining-room; the master heard Zákhar's kind voice and Albert's voice of entreaty.

"Well, what is it?" the master asked Zákhar, when he came out of it.

"He is melancholy, Dmítri Ivánovich. He does not want to wash himself, — he is so gloomy. He keeps asking for something to drink."

"Having undertaken it, I must stick to it," Delésov said to himself.

He ordered that no wine be given him, and again took up his book, involuntarily listening to what was going on in the dining-room. There was no motion there, but now and then was heard a heavy chest cough and expectoration. Two hours passed. Having dressed himself, previous to leaving the house, Delésov decided to look in on his house-mate. Albert was sitting motionless at the window, his head drooping on his hands. He looked around. His face was yellow, wrinkled, and not only

sad, but profoundly unhappy. He endeavoured to smile as a greeting, but his face assumed a still more sorrowful expression. It seemed he was ready — to weep. He rose with difficulty and bowed.

"If I just could get a small glass of brandy," he said with an entreating look. "I am so weak, — please!"

"Coffee will brace you up better. I advise you to take that."

Albert's face suddenly lost its childlike expression; he looked coldly, dimly through the window, and feebly dropped back into his chair.

"Won't you eat your breakfast now?"

"No, thank you, I have no appetite."

"If you wish to play on the violin, you will not disturb me," said Delésov, putting the violin on the table.

Albert looked at the violin with a contemptuous smile.

"No, I am too feeble, — I cannot play," he said, and pushed the instrument away from him.

After that, he only bowed humbly and kept stubborn silence in response to everything told him by Delésov, who proposed to go out with him and to take him to the opera in the evening. Delésov left the house, made several visits, dined out, and before the performance went home to change his clothes and to find out what the musician was doing. Albert was sitting in the dark antechamber, and, leaning with his head on his arms, was looking into the fire of the stove. He was cleanly dressed, washed, and groomed; but his eyes were dim and dead, and his whole figure expressed feebleness and exhaustion, even more than in the morning.

"Have you had your dinner, Mr. Albert?" Delésov asked.

Albert made an affirmative answer with his head and, casting a frightened glance at Delésov's face, lowered his eyes. Delésov felt ill at ease.

"I told the director about you this evening," he said,

himself lowering his eyes. "He will be very glad to accept you if you will allow yourself to be heard."

"Thank you, I cannot play," Albert muttered and went to his room, very softly closing the door behind him.

A few moments later, the door-knob was just as softly turned, and he came out from the room with the violin. Casting a malicious and passing glance at Delésov, he put the violin down on a chair and again disappeared.

Delésov shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"What else am I to do? What is my fault?" he thought.

"Well, how is the musician?" was his first question when he returned home late.

"Badly," was Zákhar's short, sonorous answer. "He has been sighing and coughing all the time. He does not speak, except that five or six times he has asked for brandy. I gave him one glass, for fear that we should otherwise injure him, Dmítri Ivánovich. Just so the clerk — "

"Has he played any on the violin?"

"He has not even touched it. I took it twice to him, but he picked it up and softly brought it out again," Zákhar answered, with a smile. "So had I not better give him something to drink?"

"No, we shall wait another day and see what will happen. What is he doing now?"

"He has locked himself up in the drawing-room."

Delésov went to his cabinet, where he picked up some French books and a German Gospel.

"Put these books to-morrow in his room, and be sure you don't let him out," he said to Zákhar.

On the following morning, Zákhar informed his master that the musician had not slept all night: he had walked all the time from one room to another, and had gone to the buffet-room, where he had tried to open the cupboard and the door, but everything, by Zákhar's care, was locked,

Zákhar said that while he pretended to be asleep he heard Albert in the darkness mumbling something and swaying his arms.

Albert grew gloomier from day to day. He seemed to be afraid of Delésov, and in his face there was an expression of morbid fright every time their eyes met. He never touched the books or the violin, and made no reply to the questions put to him.

Upon the third day of the musician's stay, Delésov returned home late in the evening, tired and unnerved. He had been driving about all day, attending to a matter which had seemed very simple and easy to him, and yet, as often happens, he had not been able to make a single step in advance, in spite of his special effort. Besides, having called at the club, he had lost at whist. He was out of sorts.

"God be with him!" he answered Zákhar, who had explained to him Albert's sad plight. "To-morrow I will find out definitely from him whether he wants to stay here and follow my advice, or not. If not, — all right! I have done all I can, I think."

"Do a man a favour!" he thought to himself. "I am putting myself out for him. I keep in my house this dirty creature, so that in the morning I cannot receive strangers, I run around in his behalf, and he looks upon me as some kind of a rascal who for pleasure has locked him up in a cage. And, what is worse, he will not take a step in his own behalf. They are all like that" (this "all" referred to people in general, especially those with whom he on that day had had anything to do). "What is the matter with him now? What is he thinking about and pining for? Is he pining for the debauch from which I have torn him away? For the humiliation, in which he was? For the wretchedness, from which I saved him? Evidently he has fallen so low that it is hard for him to look upon an honourable life —"

"No, it was a childish act," Delésov concluded to himself. "What business have I to mend others, when I ought to be thankful to God if I were able to get myself straightened out?" He wanted to let him go at once, but, after some reflection, he put it off until the next day.

In the night Delésov was wakened by the noise of a falling table in the antechamber, and by the sound of voices and of heavy steps. He lighted a candle and began to listen in wonderment:

"Wait, I will tell Dmítri Iványovich," said Zákhar. Albert's voice muttered something excitedly and incoherently. Delésov jumped down from his bed and with the candle ran into the antechamber. Zákhar, in night costume, was standing against the door; Albert, in his hat and cape, was pushing him away from the door and calling out to him in a tearful voice:

"You cannot keep me here. I have a passport, and I have not taken anything of yours. You may search me. I will go to the chief of police."

"Please, Dmítri Iványovich!" Zákhar turned to his master, still protecting the door with his back. "He got up in the night, found the key in my overcoat, and emptied a whole decanter of sweet brandy. Is that right? And now he wants to go away. You ordered me not to let him go, and so I am keeping him back."

When Albert saw Delésov, he made for Zákhar in still greater excitement.

"Nobody dares keep me in! Nobody has the right to!" he shouted, raising his voice higher and higher.

"Step aside, Zákhar," said Delésov. "I cannot and I will not keep you, but I should advise you to stay until the morning," he turned to Albert.

"Nobody can keep me. I will go to the chief of police," Albert cried louder and louder, addressing Zákhar alone and paying no attention to Delésov. "Help!" he suddenly screamed, in a terrible voice.

"But why are you yelling so? Nobody is keeping you," said Zákhar, opening the door.

Albert stopped crying. "You did not succeed, did you? You wanted to starve me, — no!" he muttered to himself, putting on the galoshes. Without taking leave, and continuing to mumble some incomprehensible words, he walked out through the door. Zákhar held the light for him until he reached the gate, and then returned.

"Thank the Lord, Dmítri Ivánovich! Who knows what misfortune might have befallen us. As it is, I shall have to count the silver."

Delésov only shook his head and made no reply. He now vividly recalled the first two evenings which he had passed with the musician; he recalled the last sad days which Albert, through his fault, had passed here, and, above everything else, he recalled that sweet mixed feeling of surprise, love, and compassion, which this strange man had evoked in him from the very start, and he felt sorry for him. "What will become of him now?" he thought. "Without money, without warm clothes, alone in the night —" He was on the point of sending Zákhar after him, but it was too late.

"Is it cold outside?" asked Delésov.

"It is a stiff frost, Dmítri Ivánovich," replied Zákhar. "I forgot to inform you that we shall have to get more wood to last us until spring."

"Why, then, did you say that there would be some left over?"

VII.

It was indeed cold without, but Albert did not feel it, — he was so heated by the liquor he had drunk and by the quarrel.

Upon reaching the street, he looked around him and gleefully rubbed his hands. The streets were empty, but the long row of lamps still burned with ruddy flames, and the sky was clear and star-bedecked.

"What?" he said, as he turned to the lighted window in Delésov's quarters, and, putting his hands under the cape in the pockets of his pantaloons and bending forward, Albert with heavy and insecure steps walked down the street on the right. He felt an unusual weight in his feet and in his stomach; his head was dinning; an invisible power tossed him from side to side, but he continued walking ahead, in the direction of Anna Ivánovna's house.

Strange, incoherent thoughts passed through his head. Now he recalled his last altercation with Zákhar; now he for some reason thought of the sea and of his first arrival in Russia by steamer, and now a happy night passed with a friend in a small shop, past which he was walking now; now suddenly a familiar motive went singing through his imagination, and he recalled the object of his passion and the terrible night in the theatre.

In spite of their incoherence, all these recollections presented themselves to his imagination with such clearness that he closed his eyes and was in doubt of what was the greater reality, that which he was doing, or that

which he was thinking. He did not remember, nor feel how his feet moved onward, how he staggered and struck the wall, how he looked about him, and how he crossed from street to street. He remembered and felt only that which, alternating and mingling fantastically, presented itself to him.

Passing the Small Morskáya Street, Albert stumbled and fell. Coming for a moment to his senses, he saw before him an immense, superb building, and he went on. In the sky were visible neither stars, nor the dawn, nor the moon, nor were there any lamps, and yet all objects were clearly defined. In the windows of the building, which towered in the corner of the street, lights were burning, but these lights quivered like reflections. The building grew out nearer and nearer, clearer and clearer, in front of Albert. But the lights disappeared the moment Albert entered through the wide door.

Within it was dark. Solitary steps sonorously rang out under the vaults, and shadows, gliding along, disappeared at his approach. "Why did I come here?" thought Albert; but an insuperable force drew him onward into the depth of the immense hall —

There was some kind of an elevation, and around it silently stood some small men. "Who is going to speak?" Albert asked. Nobody answered him, except that one pointed to the elevation. On that elevation already was standing, in a motley morning-gown, a tall, spare man, with bristly hair. Albert at once recognized Petróv.

"How strange that he should be here!" thought Albert.

"No, brothers!" said Petróv, pointing to some one. "You did not understand the man who was living among you! He is not a venal artist, not a mechanical performer, not an insane or deteriorated man. He is a genius, a great musical genius, who has perished among you, unnoticed and unappreciated."

Albert at once knew of whom his friend was speaking; but, not wishing to embarrass him, he modestly lowered his head.

"He has burned up, like a blade of straw, from that holy fire which we all serve," continued the voice, "but he has accomplished all that which God has imparted to him; therefore he must be called a great man. You could have despised, tormented, humbled him," the voice continued louder and louder, "but he has been and ever will be incomparably higher than all of you. He is happy, he is good. He loves or despises all equally, which is the same; he serves only that which has been imparted to him from above. He loves but one thing, beauty, — the only incontestable good in the world. Such is the man! Fall prostrate before him, all of you! On your knees!" he cried aloud.

But another voice called out from the opposite corner of the hall.

"I do not wish to kneel before him," said the voice, in which Albert at once recognized that of Delésov. "What does his greatness consist in? And why should we bend our knees before him? Has he behaved honourably and correctly? Has he been of any use to society? Do we not know that he has borrowed money without returning it, and that he carried away a violin of a fellow artist and pawned it?" ("O Lord, how does he know it all!" thought Albert, still more lowering his head.) "Do we not know that he has flattered the most insignificant people, and that, too, for the sake of money?" continued Delésov. "Do we not know that he was driven out of the theatre? That Anna Iványovna wanted to send for the police to take him away?"

"O God, that is all true, but defend me," muttered Albert, "for you alone know why I did it."

"Stop, be ashamed," again spoke Petróv. "What right have you to accuse him? Have you lived his life?

Have you experienced his transports?" ("That is so, that is so," whispered Albert.) "Art is the highest manifestation of power in man. It is given to a few chosen ones, and it lifts the chosen one to such a height that his head begins to whirl and he with difficulty can keep his senses. In art, as in every struggle, there are heroes who have entirely given themselves over to serving it and who have perished without having reached the goal."

Petróv grew silent, and Albert raised his head and cried out aloud: "It is true, it is true!" But his voice died away without a sound.

"It does not concern you," the artist Petróv sternly addressed him. "Yes, humiliate and despise him," he continued, "and yet of all of you he is the best and happiest."

Albert, who had listened to these words with bliss in his heart, could stand it no longer: he went up to his friend and wanted to kiss him.

"Get away, I do not know you," replied Petróv. "Walk along, or you won't get there — "

"I declare you are tipsy! You won't get there," called out a watchman at the corner of the street.

Albert stopped, collected all his strength, and, trying not to stagger, turned into a side street.

But a few steps were left to Anna Ivánovna's. From the vestibule of her house light fell on the snow of the courtyard, and sleighs and carriages were standing at the gate.

Grasping the balustrade with chilled hands, he ran up the stairs and rang the bell.

The sleepy face of a maid was thrust through the opening of the door and angrily looked at Albert. "You can't!" she cried. "I am told not to let you in," and the opening was slammed to.

Sounds of music and of feminine voices reached him on the staircase. He sat down on the floor, leaned his

head against the wall, and closed his eyes. Immediately swarms of incoherent but related visions beset him with new force, received him in their waves and carried him far away into the free and beautiful realm of dreams.

"Yes, he is the best and happiest!" ran involuntarily through his imagination. The sounds of a polka were heard through the door. These sounds, too, said that he was the best and the happiest. A bell in the nearest church rang out, and this bell said: "Yes, he is the best and the happiest!"

"I will go again into the hall," thought Albert. "Petróv has much to tell me."

There was now no one in the hall and, instead of the artist Petróv, Albert himself was standing on the elevation and was himself playing on the violin all that which the voice had said before. But the violin was of a strange property: it was made of glass. It was necessary to embrace it with both hands and slowly to press it to the breast in order that it might utter sounds. The sounds were tender and charming, such as Albert had never before heard. The more firmly he pressed the violin to his breast, the more joyful and blissful he felt. The louder the sounds were, the swifter the shadows disappeared and the more were the walls of the hall lighted up by a transparent light.

It was necessary to play very carefully on the violin in order not to crush it. Albert played very carefully and well on the glass instrument. He was playing things which he felt no one would ever hear again.

He was beginning to grow tired when another distant, dull sound distracted his attention. It was the sound of the bell, but this sound uttered the word: "Yes," said the bell, dinning somewhere far and high, "he seems wretched to you and you despise him, but he is the best and happiest of men! No one will ever again play on this instrument."

These familiar words suddenly appeared so clever, so new, and so just to Albert that he stopped playing and, trying not to move, raised his hands and eyes to heaven. He felt that he was beautiful and happy.

Although there was no one in the hall, Albert straightened out his chest and, proudly raising his head, stood upon the elevation in such a manner that all might see him. Suddenly somebody's hand lightly touched his shoulder; he turned around and saw a woman in the half-light. She looked sadly at him and gave a negative shake with her head. He immediately understood that that which he was doing was bad, and he was ashamed of himself.

"Whither?" he asked her. She once more cast a long, fixed look at him and sadly inclined her head. It was she, the very one he loved, and her garment was the same; on her full, white neck there was a string of pearls, and her superb arms were bare above the elbow. She took his hands and led him out of the hall.

"The exit is from the other side," said Albert; but she smiled, without making any reply, and led him out of the hall.

On the threshold of the hall Albert saw the moon and water. But the water was not below, as is generally the case, nor was the moon above a white circle, as it generally is. The moon and the water were together and everywhere, — above, below, on the sides, and all around them. Albert threw himself with her into the moon and the water, and he understood that now he could embrace her whom he loved more than all in the world. He embraced her and experienced an unutterable happiness.

"Is it not all a dream?" he asked himself, —but no! it was reality and a reminiscence. He felt that that unutterable happiness, which he was enjoying at that moment, had passed and would never again return.

"What am I weeping about?" he asked her. She

looked silently and sadly at him. Albert understood what it was she intended to say by it. "But how can it be, since I am alive?" he muttered. She made no reply but looked motionless ahead of her. "It is terrible! How can I explain to her that I am alive," he thought in terror. "O Lord, I am alive, understand me," he whispered.

"He is the best and the happiest," said a voice. But something pressed Albert harder and harder. Was it the moon and the water, or her embraces, or tears? He did not know; but he felt that he should not say all that was necessary, and that soon all would be ended.

Two guests, who came out from Anna Iványovna's, stumbled against Albert stretched out at the threshold. One of them went back and called out the hostess.

"This is inhuman," he said, "you might have allowed a man to freeze to death."

"Ah, this Albert! Here he is sitting!" replied the hostess. "Ánnushka, put him somewhere in a room," she addressed the maid.

"But I am alive, so why do you want to bury me?" muttered Albert, while they carried him unconscious into a room.

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF PRINCE D. NEKHLYÚDOV

Lucerne

1857

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF PRINCE D. NEKHLYÚDOV

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JULY 8.

LAST night I arrived in Lucerne and stopped in the Schweizerhof, the best hotel here.

"Lucerne, chief town of the canton, lying on the shore of the lake of Lucerne," says Murray, "is one of the most romantic spots in Switzerland; three chief roads meet here; and only one hour's distance by steamboat is Mount Rigi, from which is to be had one of the most magnificent views in the world."

Whether justly or not, the other Guides say the same, and therefore there are here an endless number of travellers of all nations, especially of Englishmen.

The superb five-story-high building of the Schweizerhof was lately built on the quay, right over the shore of the lake, in the very place where anciently used to be a covered, winding wooden bridge, with turrets at the corners and images on the rafters. Now, thanks to the enormous rush caused by the English, by their needs, their tastes, and their money, the old bridge was torn down and in its place was built a flagstone quay, as straight as a cane; upon the quay were put up straight, square five-story buildings; in front of the buildings they

planted two rows of linden-trees, with their supports, and between the lindens, as is proper, were placed green benches. This is a pleasure-ground; and here walk up and down English women in Swiss straw hats and English gentlemen in solid and comfortable clothes, and take pleasure out of their production. Very likely these quays, and houses, and lindens, and Englishmen are all right in some places, — they certainly are not here, amidst this strangely majestic and, at the same time, inexpressibly harmonious and gentle Nature.

When I went up-stairs to my room and opened the window facing the lake, the beauty of this water, of these mountains, and of this sky in the first moment literally blinded and shook me. I experienced an internal unrest and the necessity of giving some expression to that superabundance with which my heart brimmed over. I wanted at that moment to embrace somebody, embrace him hard, tickle and pinch him, — in general, do something unusual with him and with myself.

It was past six o'clock in the evening. It had been raining all day, and it was clearing up now. The lake, as blue as burning sulphur, with the dots of boats and their vanishing tracks, immovable, smooth, seemingly convex, spread out before the windows between the variegated green shores, passed into the distance, narrowing between two enormous promontories, and, darkling, leaned against and disappeared in the mountains, clouds, and glaciers, piled one above the other.

In the foreground are the moist, light green, receding shores with reeds, meadows, gardens, and villas; farther away are the dark green, overgrown promontories with the ruins of castles; in the background is the crumpled vista of pale lilac mountains, with their fantastic, rocky, and dimly white snow-covered summits; and all is bathed in the gentle, transparent azure of the atmosphere, and illumined by the warm rays of the sunset piercing the

rent heaven. Neither on the lake, nor on the mountains, nor on the sky was there one single precise line, not one single precise colour, not one moment like another, — everywhere motion, unsymmetricalness, fantastic shapes, endless mixture and variety of shades and lines, and over all calm, softness, unity, and the insistence of the beautiful.

And here amid the indefinite, mixed, free beauty, in the very front of my window, stupidly and artificially tower the white, cane-shaped quay, the lindens with their supports, and the green benches, — miserable, trite, human productions, not welded, like the distant villas and ruins, with the general harmony, but, on the contrary, coarsely contradicting it. My glance continually and involuntarily came in conflict with this terrible straight quay, and mentally wanted to brush it aside and destroy it, like a black spot on the nose, right under the eye, but the quay with the walking Englishmen remained, and I involuntarily endeavoured to find a view-point from which I should not see it. I finally found a way of looking so, and until dinner I enjoyed all by myself that incomplete, but so much the more sweetly tormenting, sensation, which one experiences during a solitary contemplation of the beauties of Nature.

At half-past seven I was called to dinner. In a large, superbly appointed room of the lower story two long tables were set for at least one hundred people. The silent motion of the gathering guests, the rustling of women's dresses, the light steps, the soft remarks to the most polite and elegant waiters, lasted about three minutes; then all the seats were taken by men and women, dressed exceedingly well, even richly, and, in general, with extreme neatness.

As generally in Switzerland, the greater part of the guests are English, consequently the chief characteristics of the *table d'hôte* are severe, legalized propriety, incom-

municativeness, based not on pride, but on unsociableness, and seclusive contentment in a comfortable and agreeable satisfaction of one's needs. On all sides glisten the whitest of laces, the whitest of collars, the whitest of teeth, both natural and false, the whitest of faces and hands. But the countenances, many of which are very beautiful, express only the consciousness of their own well-being and a complete inattention to all that surrounds them, if it has no direct relation to their persons, and the whitest of hands, in rings and in mittens, move only to adjust collars, carve beef, and fill the glasses with wine — no spiritual agitation is reflected in their motions.

Families now and then exchange a few words in a soft voice about some dish, or wine, or the beautiful view from Mount Rigi. Lonely travellers of both sexes sit lonely and silent side by side, not even looking at each other. If, occasionally, out of these hundred people, two speak with each other, the subject for conversation is sure to be the weather and the ascent of Mount Rigi. The knives and forks are barely audible as they move on the plates; little food is taken at a time; peas and vegetables are invariably eaten with the fork. The waiters, involuntarily submitting to the universal taciturnity, ask in a whisper what wine is desired.

At such dinners I always feel oppressed, unhappy, and, finally, sad. It seems to me all the time that I am guilty of something, that I am being punished as in my childhood, when, if I was naughty, I was put on a chair with the ironical remark, "Rest yourself, my dear!" while my youthful blood was beating in my veins, and in the other room could be heard the merry shouts of my brothers.

Formerly I tried to rebel against this feeling of oppression which I experienced during such dinners, but in vain; all these dead countenances have an insuperable effect upon me, and I become as dead as they. I wish

nothing, think nothing, and do not even observe. At first I tried to speak with my neighbours; but I received no other answers than those phrases which apparently had been repeated one hundred thousand times in the same spot and one hundred thousand times by the same person. And yet, all these people are not stupid and unfeeling; no doubt, in many of these congealed people there is going on just such an inner life as in me, and in many it is much more complex and interesting. Why, then, do they deprive themselves of one of the best pleasures of life, the enjoyment of each other, the enjoyment of their fellow men?

How different it was in our French pension, where we, twenty people of the most varied nations, professions, and characters, under the influence of French sociability, used to come together at the common table as at a game! Here, at once, from one end of the table to the other, the conversation, seasoned with jokes and puns, though frequently in broken language, became universal. There everybody prattled whatever happened to pass through his mind, unconcerned about the result; there we had our philosopher, our debater, our *bel esprit*, our butt,—everything was in common.

There we soon after dinner removed the table, and, no matter whether in time or not, began to dance *la polka* over the dusty carpet until late in the evening. There we were, it is true, coquettish, not very clever, and respectable people, but still we were men. The Spanish countess with her romantic adventures, the Italian abbot who declaimed the Divine Comedy after dinner, the American doctor who had access to the Tuileries, the young playwright with the long hair, the lady pianist who, according to her own words, had composed the best polka in the world, the unfortunate and pretty widow with three rings on every finger,—we all treated each other in a human and friendly, though superficial, manner, and

carried away, some of us light, and others genuine, sincere memories.

But at the English *tables d'hôte* I frequently think, as I look at these laces, ribbons, rings, pomaded hair, and silk dresses, how many live women would be happy and would make others happy in these ornaments. It is a strange thought, how many friends and lovers, the happiest of friends and lovers, may be sitting side by side without knowing it. And, God knows why, they will never know it, and will never give each other that happiness which it is so easy for them to give and which they desire so much.

I felt sad, as always after such dinners, and, without finishing my dessert, I went out, in the unhappiest of moods, to stroll up and down the city. The narrow, dirty streets without illumination, the closing shops, the meeting with drunken men, and with women going for water, or flitting, with hats on, along the walls of the side streets and looking around, not only did not dispel my melancholy mood, but even intensified it. It was quite dark in the streets when I, without looking around me, without any thoughts in my head, walked toward the house, hoping in sleep to rid myself of my gloomy disposition. I felt terribly cold at heart, lonely and oppressed, as sometimes happens without any visible cause when arriving in a new place.

I was walking down the quay toward the Schweizerhof, looking at nothing but my feet, when I was suddenly startled by the sounds of some strange but exceedingly agreeable and sweet music. These sounds immediately had a vivifying effect upon me, as though a bright, merry light had penetrated my soul. I felt happy and joyful. My dormant attention again was directed to the objects surrounding me. The beauty of the night and of the lake, to which I had been indifferent before, suddenly impressed me soothingly, like a novelty.

I involuntarily, at a flash, noticed the murky sky, with the gray tufts against the dark azure, lighted up by the rising moon, and the dark green smooth lake, with the little lights reflected in it, and in the distance the mist-covered mountains, and the croaking of the frogs at Freschenburg, and the fresh piping of the quails in the dewy grass on the other shore. And directly in front of me, in the spot from which issued the sounds, and upon which my attention was mainly directed, I saw in the half-darkness a group of men crowding in a semicircle in the middle of the street, and in front of the group, some distance away, a tiny man in a black dress. Back of the group and of the man, against the dark, gray and blue, rent heaven, there were delineated several black, slender poplars of a garden, and there towered majestically on both sides of an ancient cathedral two severe spires.

I came nearer and the sounds became more distinct. I could clearly make out the distant chords of a guitar, sweetly tremulous in the night air, and several voices, which, intercepting each other, did not sing the theme, but now and then, singing out the most prominent passages, indicated it. The theme was something in the nature of a sweet, graceful mazurka. The voices seemed now near, now remote; now could be heard a tenor, now a bass, and now a guttural falsetto, with the warbling Tyrolese yodels. It was not a song, but a light, masterful sketch of a song. I could not make out what it was; but it was beautiful. These passionate, feeble chords of the guitar, that sweet, soft tune, and that lonely figure of the black little man, amid the fantastic surroundings of the dark lake, the translucent moon, and the two silently towering immense spires and black poplars, — all that was strange, but inexpressibly beautiful, or seemed to me to be so.

All the mingled and involuntary impressions of life suddenly received meaning and charm for me, as though

a fresh, fragrant flower had bloomed out in my soul. Instead of fatigue, distraction, indifference for everything in the world, which I had experienced but a minute ago, I suddenly felt a need of love, a fulness of hope, and a causeless joy of life. "What is there to wish, what to desire?" I uttered, involuntarily: "Here it is, — you are on all sides surrounded by beauty and poetry. Inhale it in broad, full draughts with all the strength you have! Enjoy yourself! What else do you need? All is yours, all the bliss!"

I went nearer. The little man turned out to be a wandering Tyrolean. He was standing before the windows of the hotel, with one foot forward and his head thrown up, and, strumming the guitar, was singing his graceful song in a variety of voices. I at once felt tenderness for this man and gratitude for the change which he had caused in me. The singer, so far as I could make out, was dressed in an old black coat; his hair was black and short, and his head was covered with the commonest kind of an old burgher's cap. There was nothing aristocratic in his attire, but his dashing, childishly merry pose and motions, combined with his tiny stature, produced a pathetic, and, at the same time, an amusing effect.

In the entrance, in the windows and balconies of the magnificently illuminated hotel, stood wide-skirted ladies, gleaming in their adornments, gentlemen in the whitest of collars, and the porter and lackey in gold-embroidered liveries. In the street, in the semicircle of the crowd and farther away, in the boulevard under the lindens, had stopped and gathered elegantly dressed waiters, cooks in the whitest of caps and blouses, maidens embracing each other, and strollers. All seemed to experience the same sensation which I was experiencing. All stood in silence around the singer and listened attentively to him. Everything was quiet; only in the intervals of the song from somewhere in the distance was borne over the water

the even sound of a hammer, and from Freschenburg came the voices of the frogs in loose trills, interrupted by the moist, monotonous piping of the quails.

The little man, in the dark, in the middle of the street, trilled, like a nightingale, couplet after couplet and song after song. Although I had stepped up close to him, his singing continued to cause me great pleasure. His small voice was extremely pleasing; but the tenderness, the good taste, and the feeling of moderation, with which he handled this voice, were unusual and betrayed immense natural talent in him. The refrain for each couplet he sang differently, and it was obvious that these graceful variations came to him freely and instantly.

In the crowd, and above in the Schweizerhof, and below in the boulevard, was frequently heard a whisper of approval and reigned a respectful silence. The balconies and windows were ever more filled with dressed-up ladies and gentlemen, posing picturesquely in the light of the illumination of the hotel. Strollers stopped, and, in the shadow of the quay, men and women stood everywhere in groups near the lindens. Near me, smoking cigars, stood, somewhat removed from the rest of the crowd, an aristocratic waiter and cook. The cook strongly felt the charm of the music, and at every high falsetto note winked in ecstatic perplexity to the waiter and nudged him with his elbow, with an expression which said: "Well, how is that?" The waiter, by whose broad smile I could judge of the pleasure which the singing was causing him, replied to the cook's nudging with a shrug of the shoulders, which showed that it was hard to surprise him, and that he had heard much better singing than that.

In the interval of a song, while the singer was clearing his throat, I asked the waiter who he was, and whether he frequently came there.

"He comes about twice a summer," replied the waiter. "He is from Aargau, — a beggar."

"Are there many such?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," replied the lackey, without exactly understanding what it was I was asking him, but later, making out my question, he added: "Oh, no! He is the only one here that I know of. There are no others."

Just then the little man finished his first song, nimbly turned over his guitar, and said something to himself in his German patois, which I could not understand, but which provoked guffaws in the crowd around him.

"What did he say?" I asked.

"He says that his throat is dry, and that he would like to drink some wine," the waiter who was standing near by translated for me.

"Is he fond of drinking?"

"They are all like that," replied the waiter, smiling, and waving his hand toward him.

The singer took off his cap, and, swinging his guitar, walked over to the house. He threw back his head and turned to the gentlemen who were standing at the windows and on the balconies:

"*Messieurs et mesdames*," he said, in a half-Italian and half-German accent, and with such intonations as sleight-of-hand performers employ when addressing an audience: "*Si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose, vous vous trompez; je ne suis qu'un pauvre tiaple.*"

He stopped and was silent for a moment; but no one gave him anything. He again swung his guitar and said:

"*A présent, messieurs et mesdames, je vous chanterai l'air du Righi.*"

Above, the public was silent, but continued to stand in expectation of the next song; below, in the crowd, there was laughter, no doubt because he expressed himself so strangely, and because they gave him nothing. I gave him a few centimes; he nimbly threw them from one hand into another, stuck them into his vest pocket, and, putting on his cap, once more began to sing a graceful,

sweet Tyrolese song, which he called *l'air du Righi.* This song, which he had left for the end, was even better than the rest, and on all sides and in the swollen crowd were heard sounds of approval.

He finished his song. Again he swung his guitar; he took off his cap, held it in front of him, made two steps toward the windows, and again repeated his incomprehensible phrase: "*Messieurs et mesdames, si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose,*" which he evidently regarded as very fine and clever; but in his voice and movements I now noticed a certain indecision and childlike timidity, which were quite striking in connection with his short stature.

The elegant public stood just as picturesquely on the balconies and in the windows, bathed in the light and shining in their costly attires; some spoke to each other in properly subdued voices, apparently about the singer, who was standing before them with extended hand, while others looked attentively and with curiosity down upon the black little figure; on one balcony could be heard the sonorous, merry laughter of a young girl. In the crowd below, the conversation and laughter grew louder and louder.

The singer for the third time repeated his phrase, in a still feebler voice; he did not even finish it, but again extended his hand with the cap, and immediately dropped it again. For the second time not one of these brilliantly attired people, who had come out to hear him, threw him down a penny. The crowd laughed out pitilessly.

The little singer, it seemed to me, grew smaller still. He took the guitar into his other hand, raised his cap on his head, and said: "*Messieurs et mesdames, je vous remercie et je vous souhaite une bonne nuit,*" and put on his cap.

The crowd roared with merry laughter. By degrees the fine ladies and gentlemen disappeared from the bal-

conies, calmly conversing with each other. The strolls were resumed on the boulevard. The street, which was silent during the singing, was again lively; a few people looked at the singer from a distance, without coming nearer, and laughed. I heard the little man mumble something; he turned round, and, as though becoming smaller still, with rapid steps walked toward the town. The merry strollers, who had been looking at him, continued to watch him from a distance and laughed.

I was completely at a loss to understand what it meant, and, standing in one spot, senselessly peered into the darkness, watching the receding tiny man, who rapidly strode, with large steps, toward the town, and the laughing strollers, who followed him with their eyes. I was pained and grieved, and, above everything else, ashamed for the little man, for the crowd, for myself, as if it were I who had asked for money and had received none, and as if they were laughing at me. I, too, without looking round, with a pinched heart, striding rapidly, went home, on the veranda of the Schweizerhof. I gave no account to myself of what I was experiencing; but something heavy, something unsolved, filled my heart and pressed it down.

In the superb, illuminated entrance I met the porter, who politely stepped aside, and an English family. The firmly built, handsome, tall man, with black English side-whiskers, wearing a black hat and holding a plaid on his arm and an expensive cane in his hand, was walking lazily and self-confidently, linking arms with a lady in a gray silk dress and a cap with shining ribbons and exquisite laces. By their side walked a pretty, fresh-looking young lady, in a graceful Swiss hat with a feather *à la mousquetaire*, from underneath which soft, long, light blond locks fell over her white face. In front leaped about a ten-year-old ruddy girl, with plump, white knees, which could be seen underneath the finest of laces.

"A superb night," said the lady, in a sweet, happy voice, just as I was passing.

"*Ohe!*" lazily growled the Englishman, who, apparently, was so comfortable in life that he did not even feel like talking. Life in this world seemed to be so calm, comfortable, clean, and easy for all of them, in their motions and countenances there was expressed such indifference to the life of every stranger, and such conviction that the porter would step aside before them and bow to them, and that upon returning, they would find a clean, comfortable bed and rooms, and that it all must be so, and that they had a right to it all, — that I suddenly involuntarily opposed to them the itinerant singer, who, tired. perhaps hungry, in shame was now running away from the laughing crowd, — and I understood why such a heavy stone was weighing upon my heart, and I felt an inexpressible rage against these people. I twice passed before that Englishman, with inexpressible joy not stepping aside either time and pushing him with my elbow, and, running down the steps, rushed into the darkness, in the direction of the town, where the little man had disappeared.

Having caught up with three men who were walking together, I asked them where the singer was; they laughed and pointed him out in front of them. He was walking alone, with rapid steps; no one came near him, and he, so I thought, was still mumbling something angrily. I came abreast with him and proposed to him to go somewhere and drink a bottle of wine with him. He kept walking just as fast and looked displeased at me; but when he made out what I wanted, he stopped.

"Well, I won't refuse it, if you are so kind," he said. "Near by there is a small café where we may go in, — it is such a simple one," he added, pointing to a dramshop which was still open.

His word "simple" involuntarily made me wish to go not to the simple café, but to the Schweizerhof, there

where all were who had heard him. Although he several times, in timid agitation, refused to go to the Schweizerhof, saying that it was too elegant, I insisted upon it, and he, pretending that he was no longer embarrassed and swinging his guitar, walked back with me along the quay. The moment I had moved up to the singer a few idle strollers went up to us, listened to what I was saying, and now, having taken counsel with each other, walked after us up to the entrance, apparently expecting another performance from the Tyrolean.

I asked the waiter, whom I met in the vestibule, for a bottle of wine. The waiter, smiling, looked at us and, without making any reply, rushed past us. The head waiter, to whom I addressed the same request, listened seriously to me and, surveying from head to foot the small, timid figure of the singer, sternly told the porter to take us to the hall on the left. This hall was the wine-room for common people. In a corner of this room a hunchbacked woman was washing dishes, and all the furniture consisted of bare wooden tables and chairs. The waiter who came to serve us, looking at us with a meek, scornful smile, and putting his hands in his pockets, was talking to the hunchbacked dishwasher about something. He evidently tried to let us know that, although according to his social standing and dignity he regarded himself as incomparably higher than the singer, it not only did not offend him to wait on us, but even gave him genuine amusement.

"Do you wish simple wine?" he said, with a knowing look, winking at me and throwing his napkin from one arm to the other.

"Champagne, and of the very best," I said, trying to assume a most haughty and majestic look. But neither the champagne nor my haughty and majestic look had any effect upon the waiter: he smiled, stood awhile looking at us, leisurely cast a glance at his gold watch, and

with soft steps, as though out for a stroll, walked out of the room. He soon returned with the wine and with two more waiters. The two sat down near the dish-washer and, with cheerful attention and a meek smile on their faces, eyed us as parents eye their dear children when they are well behaved at play. The hunchbacked dishwasher seemed to be the only one who looked at us not scornfully, but sympathetically.

Although it was very hard and awkward for me, under the fire of these waiters' eyes, to chat with the singer and to treat him, I tried to do my work as independently as possible. In the light I surveyed him better. He was a tiny, well-proportioned, sinewy man, almost a midget, with bristly black hair, large, black, teary eyes, deprived of their lashes, and an exceedingly pleasing, small, sweetly curved little mouth. He had small side-whiskers and short hair, and wore the simplest and poorest kind of clothes. He was dirty, ragged, sunburnt, and had, in general, the aspect of a labourer. He more resembled a poor peddler than an artist. Only in his ever moist, gleaming eyes and puckering mouth was there something original and touching. He might have been taken for anywhere from twenty-five to forty years; in reality, he was thirty-eight years old.

This is what he with good-natured readiness and apparent sincerity told of his life. He was from Aargau. He had lost his parents in childhood, and had no other relatives. He never had any possessions. He had been apprenticed to a joiner; but twenty-two years ago he had been attacked by caries in his hand, which deprived him of the possibility of working. He had had a love for singing since childhood, and he began to sing. Foreigners now and then gave him money. He made a profession of it, bought himself a guitar, and had been wandering for eighteen years through Switzerland and Italy, singing in front of hotels.

His whole baggage consisted of the guitar and a purse, in which there were now only one franc and a half, just enough to pay for his supper and night's lodging. It was now the eighteenth time that he had made his annual summer round of all the best, most frequented parts of Switzerland, Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Chamouni, and so forth; over the St. Bernard he passes into Italy, and again returns over the St. Gothard or through Savoy. It is now getting hard for him to walk because he feels that the pain in his feet, which he calls the *Gliedersucht*, is increasing with every year, when he catches a cold, and because his eyes and voice are getting weaker. In spite of this, he is now on his way to Interlaken, Aix-les-Bains, and, over the small St. Bernard, to Italy, of which he is particularly fond; he seems, in general, to be very well satisfied with his life. When I asked him why he returned home, and whether he had any relatives there, or a house and land, his little mouth, puckering up, gathered into a merry smile, and he answered me: "*Oui, le sucre est bon, il est doux pour les enfants!*" winking to the waiters.

I did not understand anything, but the group of waiters laughed.

"There is nothing there, or I would not be going around like this," he explained to me. "I come home because something draws me back to my home."

He again, with a sly and self-contented smile, repeated the phrase, "*Oui, le sucre est bon,*" and laughed good-naturedly. The waiters were satisfied and laughed, but the hunchbacked dishwasher looked seriously with her kindly eyes at the little man and lifted his cap which he had allowed to fall down from the bench during his conversation. I had noticed that itinerant singers, acrobats, and even sleight-of-hand performers, like to call themselves artists, and so I several times hinted to my interlocutor that he was an artist; he did not at all

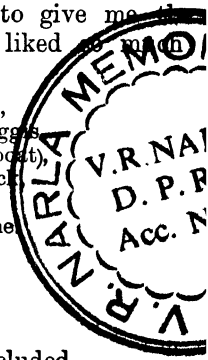
acknowledge these qualities in himself, but looked upon his business simply as a means of gaining a livelihood. When I asked him whether he did not himself compose the songs which he sang, he wondered at such a strange question, and replied that he was not equal to it, and that they were old Tyrolese songs.

"But the song of Rigi, I suppose, is not old," I said.

"Yes, it was composed about fifteen years ago. There was a German in Basles, a very clever man, and it was he who composed it. An excellent song! You see, he wrote it for the travellers."

He began, translating into French, to give me the words of the song of Rigi, which he liked so much:

"'If you wish to walk up the Rigi,
You need no shoes as far as Weggis
(Because you go there by steamboat),
And from Weggis take a big stick,
And link arms with a maiden,
And go and drink a glass of wine,
Only do not drink too much,
Because he who wants to drink
Must first earn it.'



"Oh, it is an excellent song!" he concluded.

The waiters obviously found this song very nice, for they came closer to us.

"And who composed the music?" I asked.

"Nobody. You know, to sing for foreigners you must have something new."

When ice was brought to us and I filled my companion's glass with champagne, he apparently felt ill at ease, and moved restlessly on his bench, looking around at the waiters. We clinked glasses to the health of artists; he drank half a glass and found it necessary to fall to musing and thoughtfully to frown.

"I have not drunk such wine for a long time, *je ne*

vous dis que ça. In Italy the d'Asti wine is good, but this is better still. Ah, Italy! It is glorious to be there!" he added.

"Yes, there they appreciate music and artists," I said, wishing to take him back to the failure before the Schweizerhof.

"No," he replied, "there I cannot afford anybody any pleasure with my music. The Italians themselves are musicians such as there are no other in the world; but I stick to my Tyrolese songs, — that is something new for them."

"Well, are the gentlemen more liberal there?" I continued, wishing to make him share my rage at the inmates of the Schweizerhof. "It would not happen there, as it did here, that, in an immense hotel where rich people live, one hundred should listen to an artist and not give him anything, would it?"

My question had an entirely different effect upon him from what I had expected. He did not even think of murmuring against them; on the contrary, in my remark he saw a reflection upon his talent, which did not call for any reward, and tried to justify himself before me.

"You can't always receive much," he replied. "Sometimes my voice gives out, — or I am tired; to-day I walked nine hours and sang almost all day. That is hard. The aristocrats are great gentlemen, and sometimes they do not wish to hear Tyrolese songs."

"Still, it is not right not to give anything," I repeated.

He could not understand my remark.

"It is not that," he said, "but the main thing is *on est très serré pour la police*, that's where the trouble is. Here, according to the republican laws, you are not permitted to sing, but in Italy you may walk about as much as you please, and no one will say a word to you. Here, if they want to let you, they let you, and if they don't want to, they can put you even in jail."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes. If you were once told not to, and you keep it up, they can put you in jail. I was three months in jail," he said, smiling, as though this were one of his pleasantest recollections.

"Ah, that is terrible!" I said. "For what?"

"This is so according to their new republican laws," he continued, with animation. "They do not wish to consider that a poor man must live somehow. If I were not a cripple I would work. Do I hurt any one by my singing? What is this? Rich people may live as they please, but *un pauvre tiaple* like myself may not even live. What laws of the republic are these? If so, we do not want a republic, — is it not so, dear sir? We do not want a republic, — but we want — we want simply — we want" — he hesitated awhile — "we want natural laws."

I filled up his glass.

"You are not drinking," I said to him.

He took the glass in his hand and bowed to me.

"I know what you want," he said, blinking and threatening me with a finger. "You want to get me drunk so as to see what I shall do; but no, you won't succeed."

"Why should I get you drunk?" I said. "I only wanted to afford you pleasure."

He evidently was sorry for having offended me by his bad interpretation of my intention; he became embarrassed, got up, and pressed my elbow.

"No, no," he said, looking at me with an imploring expression of his moist eyes, "I am only jesting."

Thereupon he pronounced a terribly mixed up, sly phrase, by which he meant to say that I was all the same a good fellow.

"*Je ne vous dis que ça!*" he concluded.

Thus we continued to drink and talk, while the waiters continued without embarrassment to watch us, and, it

seemed, to make fun of us. Notwithstanding my interest in the conversation, I could not help noticing them, and, I confess, I grew angrier and angrier. One of them got up, walked over to the little man, and, looking at the crown of his head, began to smile. I had a charge of rage ready against the inmates of the Schweizerhof, which I had not yet had a chance of letting loose, and now, I must confess, this waiter audience roiled me. The porter entered the room without taking off his cap, and, leaning on the table, sat down near me. This latter circumstance, touching my vanity and egotism, set me off completely. I gave vent to that oppressive rage which had been gathering in me all evening. Why does he bow to me humbly in the entrance when I am alone, and why does he now, when I am sitting with an itinerant singer, rudely locate himself near me? I was infuriated with that boiling rage of indignation, which I love and even fan in myself whenever it besets me, because it acts soothingly upon me, and gives me, at least for a short time, a certain extraordinary pliability, energy, and power of all physical and moral faculties.

I jumped up from my seat.

"What are you laughing at?" I shouted at the waiter, feeling that my face was growing pale, and my lips were involuntarily jerking.

"I am not laughing, I am just so," replied the waiter, receding from me.

"No, you are laughing at this gentleman. What right have you to be here and to sit here, when there are guests in the room? Don't dare stay here!" I cried.

The porter got up with a growl and moved toward the door.

"What right have you to laugh at this gentleman and to sit near him when he is a guest and you are a waiter? Why did you not laugh at me to-day at dinner, and seat yourself near me? Is it because he is poorly clad and

sings in the street? is it? while I wear good clothes? He is poor, but he is a thousand times better than you, I am convinced of that, because he has not offended any one, while you are insulting him."

"But I am not doing anything, please," said my enemy, the waiter. "I do not keep him from sitting here."

The waiter did not understand me, and my German speech was lost on him. The rude porter tried to take the waiter's part, but I attacked him with such violence that he pretended that he, too, did not understand me, and waved his hand. The hunchbacked dishwasher, either because she noticed my heated condition and was afraid of scandal, or because she shared my opinion, took my part, and, trying to stand between me and the porter, begged him to be quiet, saying that I was right, and asked me to calm myself. "*Der Herr hat Recht; Sie haben Recht*," she kept repeating.

The singer presented a most wretched, frightened appearance, and, evidently not comprehending the cause of my excitement or what it was I wanted, begged me to go away as soon as possible from there. But a malignant garrulity burned stronger and stronger within me. I recalled everything: the crowd which had laughed at him and the audience which had not given him anything, and I did not want to quiet down for anything in the world. I think that if the waiters and the porter had not been so yielding, I should have enjoyed a fight with them, or I should have whacked the defenceless English young lady with a stick over her head. If at that moment I had been at Sevastopol, it would have given me pleasure to rush headlong to cut and slash in the English trenches.

"Why did you take this gentleman and me to this and not to the other hall? Eh?" I pressed the porter, seizing his arm in order to keep him from escaping. "What right did you have to decide by looks that this

gentleman must be in this and not in the other hall? Are not all who pay equal in hotels? Not only in a republic, but anywhere in the world? Damn your republic! You call this equality! You would not have dared to take the Englishmen to this room, those very Englishmen who had listened to this gentleman for nothing, that is, who each one of them stole from him a few centimes, which they ought to have given him. How did you dare to assign to us this hall?"

"The other hall is closed," replied the porter.

"No," I shouted, "it is not true, the hall is not closed!"

"Then you know better."

"I know, I know that you are lying."

The porter turned his shoulder to me.

"Ah, what is the use of talking?" he mumbled.

"No, not 'what is the use of talking,'" I shouted, "but take me this minute to the other hall!"

In spite of the request of the hunchbacked woman and the singer's entreaties to go home, I called for the head waiter and went to the hall with my companion. When the head waiter heard my raving voice and saw my agitated face, he did not try to dispute with me, but said to me with contemptuous politeness that I could go wherever I pleased. I could not give the porter the lie, because he had concealed himself before I entered the hall.

The hall was really open and illuminated, and at one of the tables an Englishman and a lady were sitting at supper. Although we were shown to a separate table, I sat down with the dirty singer near the Englishman, and ordered the unfinished bottle brought in.

The Englishman and the lady looked, at first in surprise, and then in anger, at the little man, who was sitting near me more dead than alive; they said something to each other, and she pushed away her plate, rustled with

her silk dress, and both disappeared. I could see the Englishman beyond the glass door saying something angrily to a waiter, all the time pointing in our direction with his hand. The waiter moved up to the door and looked through it. I was expecting, with a pang of joy, that they would come to take us out, and that, at last, I should have a chance of pouring forth my indignation upon them. But, luckily, they left us alone, though then it displeased me.

The singer, who before had refused the wine, now hastened to empty the bottle in order to get away as soon as possible. Still, I thought, he feelingly thanked me for the treat. His tearful eyes became even more tearful and shining, and he uttered to me the strangest and most intricate phrase of gratitude. And yet the phrase, in which he said that if all honoured an artist the way I had done, he would be happy, and that he wished me all happiness, was very agreeable to me.

We walked together out into the vestibule. Here stood the waiters and my enemy, the porter, who, I thought, was complaining of me to them. They seemed all of them to look upon me as an insane man. I allowed the little man to come abreast with all that public, and here I took off my cap with all the respectfulness which I was able to express in my person, and pressed his hand with the ossified and dried-up finger. The waiters acted as though they did not pay the least attention to me, and only one of them laughed a sardonic laugh.

When the singer, bowing himself out, disappeared in the darkness, I went up-stairs, wishing to forget in sleep all these impressions and the foolish, childlike anger which had so suddenly beset me. But, feeling myself too much agitated for sleep, I again went into the street, in order to walk around until I should become calmed down, and, I must confess, with the dim hope of finding an opportunity of quarrelling with the porter, the waiter, or the English-

man, and of proving to them all their cruelty and, above everything else, their injustice. However, I met no one but the porter, who, upon seeing me, turned his back to me, and I began all sole alone to walk up and down the quay.

Here it is, the strange fate of poetry, I reflected, after quieting down a little. All love and seek it, wish and seek it alone in life, and nobody acknowledges its power, nobody esteems this highest good of the world, nor esteems and thanks those who give it to people. Ask whomever you wish, ask all the inmates of the Schweizerhof what the highest good in the world is, and all of them, or ninety-nine in every hundred, assuming a sardonic expression, will tell you that the highest good of the world is money.

"It may be this idea does not please you and does not comport with your exalted ideas," he will tell you, "but what is to be done, since human life is so constituted that money alone forms the happiness of man? I could not help letting my reason see the world as it is," he will add, "that is, see the truth."

Wretched is your mind, wretched the happiness which you wish, and you yourself are a miserable being, not knowing what you need — Why have you all left your country, relatives, occupations, and money affairs, and congregated in the small Swiss town of Lucerne? Why did you all pour forth this evening upon the balconies and in respectful silence listen to the song of a little mendicant? And if he had chosen to sing longer, you would still have been silent and would have listened. What? For money, even for millions, could you be driven out of your country and collected in this small corner, in Lucerne? For money could you all have been gathered on the balconies and be compelled for half an hour to stand in silence and motionless?

No! There is one thing which causes you to act and which eternally will move you more powerfully than all

the other movers of life, and that is the need of poetry which you do not acknowledge, but which you feel, and will eternally feel, as long as there is anything human left in you. The word "poetry" is ridiculous to you,—you use it as a scornful reproach; you admit the love for a poetical something in children and silly maidens, but still you laugh at them; for yourselves you need something positive.

However, it is the children who look soundly at life; they love and know what a man must love and what gives happiness, while life has so enmeshed and debauched you that you laugh at that which alone you love, and seek only that which you hate and which causes your unhappiness. You are so enmeshed that you do not understand the obligation which you have to the poor Tyrolean who has afforded you a pure enjoyment, and at the same time you feel obliged to humble yourselves before a lord for nothing, without gain or pleasure, and for some reason to sacrifice for him your peace and comfort. What nonsense! What insoluble insipidity!

But it is not that which has most affected me this evening. This ignorance of that which gives happiness, this unconsciousness of poetical enjoyments I almost understand, or have become accustomed to, having frequently met with it in life; nor was the unconscious cruelty of the crowd anything new to me. Whatever the advocates of the popular spirit may say, the crowd may be a union of good people, but they touch each other only by their base, animal sides, and express only the weakness and cruelty of human nature. But how could you, children of a free, humane nation, you Christians, you, simply men, answer with coldness and ridicule to a pure enjoyment afforded you by an unfortunate mendicant? But no, there are refuges for beggars in your country. There are no beggars, there must not be, and there must not be the feeling of compassion upon which beggardom is based.

But he laboured, gave you pleasure; he implored you to give him something of your superabundance for his labour which you made use of. But you watched him as a rarity with a cold smile, down from your high, shining palaces, and among hundreds of you happy and rich people there was not found one man or woman to throw anything down to him! Put to shame, he walked away from you, — and the senseless crowd, laughing, pursued and insulted not you, but him, because you are cold, cruel, and dishonest; because you stole enjoyment from him, which he had afforded you, they offended *him.*

"*On the 7th of July, 1857, an itinerant singer for half an hour sang songs and played the guitar in Lucerne in front of the Schweizerhof, where the richest people stop. About one hundred persons listened to him. The singer three times asked all to give him something. Not one person gave him anything, and many laughed at him.*"

This is not fiction, but a positive fact which those who wish may find out from the permanent inmates of the Schweizerhof and by looking up in the newspapers who the foreigners were who on the 7th of July stopped at the Schweizerhof.

This is an occurrence which the historians of our time ought to note down with fiery, indelible letters. This incident is more significant, more serious, and has a deeper meaning than the facts that are noted down in newspapers and histories. That the English have killed another thousand Chinamen because the Chinese buy nothing for money, while their country swallows all the coin; that the French have killed another thousand Kabyles because grain grows well in Africa and because constant war is useful for the formation of armies; that the Turkish ambassador in Naples cannot be a Jew; and that Emperor Napoleon strolls down in Plombières and in print assures the people that he is ruling only by the will of the whole nation, — all these are only words

which conceal or reveal long-known facts. But the incident which took place at Lucerne on the 7th of July seems to me to be entirely new and strange, and refers not to the eternal, bad sides of human nature, but to a certain epoch of social evolution. This is not a fact for the history of human actions, but for the history of progress and for civilization.

Why is this inhuman fact, which is impossible in any German, French, or Italian village, possible here, where civilization, freedom, and equality have been carried to the highest point, where the most civilized travellers from the most civilized nations congregate? Why have these developed, humane people, who are in general capable of every honourable and humane work, no heart-felt human feeling for a personal good act? Why do these people, who in their parliament, their meetings, and their societies are greatly concerned about the condition of the unmarried Chinese in India, about the dissemination of Christianity and culture in Africa, about the foundation of societies for the betterment of the whole human race, not find in their souls the first, primitive feeling of man to man? Is it possible they have not that feeling, and that its place is occupied by vanity, ambition, and selfishness, which guide them in their parliament, their meetings, and their societies? Is it possible that the dissemination of a sensible, self-loving association of men, called civilization, destroys and contradicts the demands of an instinctive and loving association? And is this that equality for which so much innocent blood has been spilled and so many crimes have been committed? Can nations, like children, be happy in the mere sound of the word equality?

Equality before the law? Does the whole life of people take place in the sphere of the law? Only one thousandth part of it is subject to law; the other part takes place outside of it, in the sphere of social customs

and conceptions. In society the waiter is better dressed than the singer, and he with impunity insults him. I am better dressed than the waiter, and I with impunity insult the waiter. The porter regards himself as higher, and the singer as lower than the waiter; when I joined the singer, he regarded himself as our equal, and became rude. I grew insolent to the porter, and the porter acknowledged himself to be lower than I. The waiter was insolent with the singer, and the singer considered himself lower than he. Is that a free, what people call a positively free, country, where there is even one citizen who is put in jail because he, doing nobody any harm, interfering with nobody, does the one thing he can do in order not to starve?

An unfortunate, miserable being is man with his need of positive solutions, cast into this eternally moving, endless ocean of good and evil, of facts, of reflections and contradictions! Men have been struggling and labouring for ages to segregate the good on one side, and the evil on the other. Ages pass, and no matter what the unprejudiced mind may have added to the scales of good and evil, the balance does not waver, and on each side there is just as much good as evil.

If man but learned not to judge and not to think sharply and positively, and not to give answers to questions given to him only that they might always remain questions! If he only understood that every idea is both false and just! False — on account of its one-sidedness, on account of the impossibility of man's embracing the whole truth; and just — as an expression of one side of human tendencies. They have made subdivisions for themselves in this eternally moving, endless, endlessly mixed chaos of good and evil; they have drawn imaginary lines on this sea, and now are waiting for this sea to cleave apart, as though there were not millions of other subdivisions from an entirely different point of view,

in another plane. It is true, — these new subdivisions are worked out by the ages, but millions of these ages have passed and still will pass.

Civilization is good, barbarism evil; freedom is good, enslavement evil. It is this imaginary knowledge which destroys the instinctive, most blissful primitive demands of good in human nature. And who will define to me what freedom is, what despotism, what civilization, what barbarism? And where are the limits of the one and of the other? In whose soul is this measure of good and evil so imperturbable that he can measure with it the fleeting, mixed facts? Whose mind is so large as to embrace and weigh all the facts even of the immovable past? And who has seen a condition such that good and evil did not exist side by side in it? And how do I know but that I see more of the one than of the other because I do not stand in the proper place? And who is able so completely to tear his mind away from life, even for a moment, independently to cast a bird's-eye view upon it?

There is one, but one impeccable leader, the Universal Spirit, who penetrates us all as one and each separately, who imparts to each the tendency toward that which is right; that same Spirit, who orders the tree to grow toward the sun, orders the flower to cast seeds in the fall, and orders us unconsciously to press together.

This one, impeccable, blissful voice is drowned by the boisterous, hasty development of civilization. Who is the greater man and the greater barbarian, — the lord, who upon seeing the singer's soiled garment, angrily rushed away from the table, who for his labours did not give him one millionth of his possessions, and who now, well-fed and sitting in a lighted, comfortable room, calmly judges of the affairs of China, finding all the murders committed there justified, — or the little singer, who, risking imprisonment, with a franc in his pocket, has for

twenty years harmlessly wandered through mountains and valleys, bringing consolation to people with his singing, who has been insulted, who was almost kicked out to-day, and who, tired, hungry, humiliated, went away to sleep somewhere on rotting straw ?

Just then I heard in the town, amid the dead silence of the night, far, far away, the guitar of the little man and his voice.

No, I involuntarily said to myself, you have no right to pity him and to be indignant at the lord's well-being. Who has weighed the internal happiness which lies in the soul of each of these men ? He is sitting somewhere on a dirty threshold, looking into the gleaming moonlit heaven, and joyfully singing amid the soft, fragrant night ; in his heart there is no reproach, no malice, no regret. And who knows what is going on now in the souls of all these people, behind these rich, high walls ? Who knows whether there is in all of them as much careless, meek joy of life and agreement with the world as lives in the soul of this little man ?

Endless is the mercy and all-wisdom of Him who has permitted and has commanded all these contradictions to exist. Only to you, insignificant worm, who are boldly, unlawfully trying to penetrate His laws, His intentions, — only to you do they appear as contradictions. He meekly looks down from His bright, immeasurable height and enjoys the endless harmony in which you all move contradictorily and endlessly. In your pride you thought you could tear yourself away from the universal law. No, even you, with your petty little indignation at the waiters, even you have responded to the harmonious necessity of the eternal and the endless.

THREE DEATHS

A Story

1859

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A Story

I.

It was autumn. On the highway two carriages were passing, with their horses on the trot. In the front carriage two ladies were sitting. One was a pale, lean lady, the other a radiantly ruddy and plump chambermaid. Her short, dry hair peeped out underneath her faded hat, and her red hand in a torn glove by fits and starts adjusted it again. Her high bosom, covered with a heavy kerchief, breathed health; her quick black eyes now watched the vanishing fields through the windows, now timidly looked at the lady, now restlessly surveyed the corners of the carriage. Before the chambermaid's nose was swinging the master's hat, hanging down from the netting; on her knees lay a pup; her legs were lifted up on account of the boxes which were lying on the floor, and her feet softly drummed upon them, keeping time with the jolting of the springs and the clattering of the panes.

Folding her hands upon her knees and closing her eyes, the lady feebly swayed on the pillows placed at her back, and, slightly frowning, inwardly cleared her throat. On her head there was a white nightcap and a blue ker-

chief, tied over her tender, white neck. A straight part, disappearing under the cap, divided her blond, extremely flat, pomaded hair, and there was something dry and dead in the whiteness of the skin of that broad part. A flabby, somewhat sallow skin hung loosely over the thin and beautiful contours of her face and was crimsoned on her cheeks and over her cheek-bones. Her lips were dry and restless, her scanty eyelashes did not curl, and her cloth travelling capote made straight folds over her sunken breast. Although the lady's eyes were closed, her face expressed fatigue, irritation, and habitual suffering.

The lackey, leaning on his seat, was dozing on the box. The post-driver, shouting, briskly urged on his large, sweaty four-in-hand, occasionally looking at the other driver who was shouting from behind in the calash. The parallel, broad tracks of the tires fell evenly and fast on the dirty, chalky road. The sky was gray and cold; a damp mist drizzled down on the fields and on the road. The carriage was close and smelled of eau de Cologne and dust. The sick woman drew back her head and softly opened her eyes. Her large eyes were sparkling and of a beautiful dark hue.

"Again," she said, nervously, with her beautiful, lean hand pushing aside the end of the chambermaid's cloak, which had barely touched her foot. Her mouth was drawn in a sickly curve.

Matréna lifted her cloak with both her hands, raised herself on her strong legs, and seated herself farther away. Her fresh face was covered with a crimson blush. The beautiful dark eyes of the patient eagerly watched the movements of the chambermaid. The lady leaned with both her arms against her seat, and also wished to raise herself in order to sit up higher, but her strength failed her. Her mouth was bent awry, and her whole countenance was marred by an expression of impotent, malignant irony.

"If you only offered to help me!— Ah, it is unnecessary! I can do it myself, only, please, don't put any of your bags, or anything, behind my back!— Don't touch me, if you can't do any better!"

The lady closed her eyes, and, again quickly raising her eyelids, cast a glance at the chambermaid. Matréna looked at her, and bit her red lower lip. A heavy sigh rose from the sick woman's breast, and, without ending, changed into a cough. She turned aside, frowned, and with both her hands clasped her breast. When the cough stopped she again closed her eyes and sat motionless. The carriage and calash drove into a village. Matréna put her stout hand out from the kerchief and made the sign of the cross.

"What is this?" asked the lady.

"A station, madam."

"Why are you making the sign of the cross, I ask?"

"There is a church here, madam."

The patient turned to the window and began slowly to cross herself, looking with widely open eyes at the large village church, around which the carriage of the patient was driving.

The carriage and calash stopped at the station. From the calash stepped the patient's husband and a doctor, and both walked over to the carriage.

"How are you feeling?" asked the doctor, feeling her pulse.

"Well, my dear, are you tired?" the husband asked, in French. "Don't you want to step out?"

Matréna, picking up the bundles, pressed herself into a corner, in order not to interfere with the conversation.

"Nothing,— just the same," replied the patient. "I will not get out."

Her husband stood awhile and then went into the station-house. Matréna jumped out of the carriage and ran on tiptoe over the mud to the gate.

"My not feeling well is no reason why you should not have your breakfast," the patient, softly smiling, said to the doctor, who was standing at the window.

"They none of them care for me," she added to herself the moment the doctor stepped aside and in a trot ran up the stairs of the station. "They are well, so it is all right. Oh, my God!"

"Well, Éduard Ivánovich," said the husband, meeting the doctor, and rubbing his hands with a merry smile, "I have sent for the lunch-basket. What do you think about it?"

"That's all right," replied the doctor.

"Well, how is she?" the husband asked, with a sigh lowering his voice and raising his brows.

"I told you that she could not reach Italy. God grant she may reach Moscow, especially in this weather."

"What am I to do? Ah, my God! My God!" the husband closed his eyes with his hands. "Bring it here," he added, addressing the man who brought in the lunch-basket.

"You ought to have remained there," replied the doctor, shrugging his shoulders.

"But tell me, what could I do?" retorted the husband. "I used every possible means to keep her back: I spoke of the expense, and of the children, whom we had to leave, and of my affairs, — she would not listen to anything. She is making plans for her life abroad, as though she were to live. If I were to tell her of her condition, I should only kill her."

"She is already killed, — you must know that, Vasíli Dmítrich. A person can't live when there are no lungs, and new lungs won't grow out again. It is sad and hard, but what is to be done? It is your business and mine to make her end as quiet for her as possible, that is all. A confessor is needed here."

"Ah, my God! Think of my condition! How can

I remind her of the last will? Come what may, I shall not tell her. You know how good she is — "

"Still, try to persuade her to stay until the winter roads are open," said the doctor, significantly shaking his head, "or something bad may happen on the road — "

"Aksyúsha! Oh, Aksyúsha!" screamed the inspector's daughter, throwing a jacket over her head, and trudging through the dirt of the back porch, "come, let us look at the Shírkin lady! They say that they are taking her abroad on account of her lung trouble. I have never seen yet how people look when they have consumption."

Aksyúsha jumped out on the threshold, and both, taking each other's hands, ran out of the gate. They slackened their steps, as they passed by the carriage, and looked through the lowered window. The patient turned her head to them, but, noticing their curiosity, she frowned and turned away from them.

"Sakes," said the inspector's daughter, swiftly turning her head around. "What a great beauty she used to be, and see what she is now like! It is just terrible. Did you see, did you see, Aksyúsha?"

"Yes, how lean she is!" Aksyúsha agreed with her. "Let us go and see again! We will pretend we are going to the well. You see, she has turned her face away, but I saw her. How pitiful it is, Másha!"

"How muddy it is!" replied Másha, and both ran back through the gate.

"I must look terrible," thought the patient. "If I could only get abroad immediately! There I shall quickly recuperate."

"Well, how are you, my dear?" said the husband, walking over to the carriage and munching at something

"Always one and the same question," thought the patient, "and he himself eats!"

"So so," she said, through her teeth.

"Do you know, my dear, I am afraid you will feel

worse from travelling in such weather, and Éduard Ivánovich says so, too. Had we not better return?"

She kept sullen silence.

"The weather will improve, the roads will get settled, and you will feel better; we should then all of us travel with you."

"Excuse me. If I had not paid attention to you before, I should now be in Berlin, and might have been well by this time."

"What is to be done, my angel? You know it is impossible. But now, if you stayed another month you would improve wonderfully, and I should be through with my affairs, and we could take the children with us — "

"The children are well, and I am not."

"Don't you see, my dear, in this weather, you might get worse on the road, while, otherwise, you would at least be at home."

"What of home? To die at home?" the patient replied, in a passion. But the words "to die" apparently frightened her, and she looked imploringly and interrogatively at her husband. He lowered his eyes and was silent. The patient's mouth suddenly assumed childish curves, and tears coursed down from her eyes. Her husband covered his face with his handkerchief and silently walked away from the carriage.

"No, I will travel," said the patient, lifting up her eyes to the sky. She folded her hands, and began to lisp incoherent words. "My God! For what?" she said, and the tears flowed more copiously. She prayed long and fervently; but in her breast was the same painful and oppressive feeling; in the sky, in the fields, and on the road was the same gray gloom; the same autumnal mist, neither thickening, nor lifting, drizzled down on the mud of the road, on the roofs, on the carriage, and on the sheepskins of the drivers, who, conversing in strong, cheerful voices, were greasing and hitching up the carriage.

II.

THE carriage was hitched up, but the driver hesitated. He went into the drivers' room. It was hot, close, dark, and oppressive in the hut, and there was there an odour of human evaporations, baked bread, cabbage, and sheepskins. There were several drivers in the room; the cook was busy at the oven; a sick man was lying on the oven, wrapped in sheepskins.

"Uncle Fédor! Oh, Uncle Fédor!" said the young driver, in sheep-fur coat and with the whip stuck in his belt, upon entering the room and turning to the sick man.

"What do you want of Fédor, lazybones?" called out one of the drivers. "They are waiting for you in the carriage."

"I want to ask him for his boots; I have worn mine out," replied the lad, tossing up his hair and straightening his mittens in his belt. "Is he asleep? Oh, Uncle Fédor!" he repeated, walking over to the oven.

"What is it?" was heard a feeble voice, and a lean, red face bent down from the oven. A broad, emaciated, and pale hand, covered with hair, was drawing a camel coat over the angular shoulder, covered by a dirty shirt. "Let me have a drink, my friend!"

The lad handed him a dipper with water.

"Say, Fédor," he said, hesitating, "I suppose you do not need your new boots now; let me have them! I suppose you are not going to wear them."

The sick man, dropping his feeble head on the shining

dipper and wetting his scanty, sprawling moustache in the dark water, drank weakly and eagerly. His matted beard was not clean; his sunken, dim eyes were with difficulty raised upon the face of the lad. Taking his head away from the water, he wanted to lift his hand in order to wipe off his wet lips, but he could not, and so wiped them on the sleeve of his coat. He was silent and breathed heavily through his nose, looking straight at the driver's eyes, and collecting his strength.

"Maybe you have promised somebody else?" said the lad, "then it is in vain. The trouble is it is wet outside, and I have to work out, so I thought I would ask Fédor for his boots, — maybe he does not need them. If you need them yourself, say so."

Something began to gurgle and growl in the sick man's breast; he bent over and began to choke with a guttural, unyielding cough.

"What does he need them for?" the cook suddenly screamed so as to be heard by all. "He has not come down from the oven for more than a month. Do you hear how he coughs? It gives me a pain inside just to listen to him. What use can he make of the boots? They will not bury him in new boots. It has long been time for him, God forgive me the sin! Just hear how he suffers. He ought to be taken to some other hut, or somewhere! They say there are such sick-houses in the city, but here he takes up a whole corner, and that's the end of it. I have no room at all. And they demand cleanliness, too."

"Oh, Seréga! Go on the box, the people are waiting," the post elder shouted through the door.

Seréga wanted to leave without waiting for an answer, but the sick man gave him to know with his eyes, while coughing, that he wanted to answer him.

"Take my boots, Seréga," he said, suppressing the cough and resting a little. "Only, listen, buy me a

stone when I am dead," he added, with a rattle in his throat.

"Thank you, uncle! I will take them, and, upon my word, I will buy you a stone."

"Boys, you have heard what he has said," was all the sick man was able to say. He again bent down and began to strangle.

"All right, we have heard it," said one of the drivers. "Go, Seréga, take your seat, for there the elder is running again. The Shírkin lady, you know, is ill."

Seréga briskly pulled off his torn, disproportionately large boots and flung them under a bench. Uncle Fédor's new boots exactly fitted his feet, and Seréga, looking at them, went out to the carriage.

"What fine boots! Let me grease them," said the driver, with the axle-grease in his hand, just as Seréga, climbing on the box, was adjusting the reins. "Did he give them to you for nothing?"

"Do you begrudge them to me?" replied Seréga, rising a little and wrapping the skirts of his camel coat around his legs. "Come now! Oh, there, my darlings!" he shouted to the horses and swayed his little whip, and the carriage and calash, with their passengers, portmanteaus, and boxes, swiftly rolled over the wet road, disappearing in the gray autumnal mist.

The sick driver was left in the close room upon the oven. He got no relief from his coughing, with difficulty turned himself on his other side, and grew silent.

People came, went away, dined in the room until evening, but nothing was heard of the sick man. Before night, the cook climbed on the oven and fetched down from over his legs a sheepskin fur coat.

"Nastásya, don't be angry with me," muttered the sick man, — "I shall soon clear away from your corner."

"All right, all right, never mind," said Nastásya. "What is it that hurts you, uncle? Tell me!"

"My whole inside. God knows what it is."

"I suppose your throat is hurting you from the way you cough?"

"It pains me everywhere. My death is near at hand, that's what it is. Oh, oh, oh!" groaned the sick man.

"Cover up your feet like this," said Nastásya, on her way down, pulling the camel coat over him, and climbing down from the oven.

In the night the lamp burned dimly. Nastásya and some ten drivers slept on the floor and benches with mighty snoring. Only the sick man feebly groaned, coughed, and turned around on the oven. Toward morning he grew entirely quiet.

"I had a wonderful dream last night," said the cook, stretching herself the next morning in the dim twilight. "I saw Uncle Fédor getting down from the oven and going out to chop some wood. 'Nastásya, let me help you,' says he; and I said, 'You have not the strength to chop wood,' but he seized the axe and began to chop so fast, so fast that only the chips flew. 'You have been ill,' says I. 'No,' says he, 'I am well,' and he swung the axe so that I was overcome with terror. I screamed, and I awoke. I wonder whether he is dead. Uncle Fédor! Oh, uncle!"

Fédor made no reply.

"He must be dead! I will go and see," said one of the drivers, waking up.

A lean hand, covered with reddish hair, was hanging down from the oven: it was cold and pale.

"I will go and tell the inspector: I think he is dead," said the driver.

Fédor had no relatives, — he was from some distant place. On the next day he was buried in the new cemetery, back of the grove, and Nastásya for several days told everybody of her dream, and that she was the first to think of Uncle Fédor.

III.

SPRING came. Over the wet streets of the city hasty rivulets murmured between manure-covered ice-heaps; the colours of people's clothes were bright, and the sounds of the strollers' voices were merry. In the little gardens back of the fences the buds of the trees were swelling, and their branches could just be heard swaying in the fresh breeze. Everywhere flowed and dripped transparent water-drops. The sparrows squeaked discordantly and fluttered about on their little wings. On the sunny side, on the fences, houses, and trees, everything was in motion and sparkling. There was joy and youth in heaven, upon earth, and in the hearts of men.

In one of the chief streets, before a large, lordly house, fresh straw was strewn; in the house was that same dying patient, who was hurrying abroad.

At the closed door of the room stood the patient's husband and an elderly woman. Upon a couch sat a priest with downcast eyes, and holding something, wrapped in the chasuble. In the corner, in an easy chair, lay an old woman, the patient's mother, weeping bitterly. Near her a chambermaid held a clean handkerchief in her hand, waiting for the old lady to ask for it; another was rubbing the old woman's temples with something, and sprinkling something on her gray hair under her cap.

"Well, Christ aid you, my dear," said the husband to the elderly woman who was standing at the door, "she has such confidence in you, and you know how to speak with

her, so persuade her, my dear, please do!" He was on the point of opening the door for her cousin; but she held him back, several times put her handkerchief to her eyes, and tossed her head.

"Now, I think I do not look as if I had been crying," she said, and, opening the door herself, went in.

The husband was in great agitation, and seemed to be quite distracted. He started in the direction of the old lady, but, when he came within a few steps of her, he turned back, several times paced up and down the room, and walked over to the priest. The priest looked at him, raised his eyebrows to heaven, and sighed. His thick, gray-spotted beard also rose and fell.

"My God! My God!" said the husband.

"What is to be done?" said the priest, sighing, and again his eyebrows and beard rose and fell.

"And her mother is here!" said the husband, almost in despair. "She will not live through it. She loves her, she loves her so, — how she — I do not know. Father, try to calm her, and to persuade her to leave!"

The priest got up and went up to the old lady.

"That is so, nobody can appreciate a mother's heart," he said, "but God is merciful."

The old lady's face suddenly began to jerk, and she was attacked by hysterical hiccoughs.

"God is merciful," continued the priest, when she quieted down a little. "Let me inform you, in my parish there was a patient, — he was much worse off than Márya Dmítrievna, — well, a simple burgher cured her with herbs in a short time. This burgher now happens to be in Moscow. I told Vasíli Dmítrievich, — you might try him. At least, it would be a consolation for the patient. Everything is possible with God."

"No, she will not live," muttered the old lady. "God is taking her instead of me." Her hysterical hiccoughs increased to such a degree that she fainted.

The husband of the patient covered his face with his hands and ran out of the room.

In the corridor, the first person he met was a six-year-old boy, chasing a younger sister as fast as he could.

"Don't you wish to have the children taken to their mamma?" asked the nurse.

"No, she does not want to see them, — it irritates her."

The boy stopped for a moment, looking fixedly into his father's face, then suddenly stamped his foot and with a merry laugh ran ahead.

"She pretends to be the black horse, papa!" shouted the boy, pointing to his sister.

In the meantime the cousin was sitting in the other room near the patient and in an artful conversation trying to prepare her for the thought of death. The doctor was mixing a medicine at another window.

The patient, dressed in a white capote, and bolstered up by pillows, was sitting on the bed and silently looking at her cousin.

"Ah, my friend," she said, unexpectedly interrupting her, "do not prepare me. Do not regard me as a child. I am a Christian. I know all. I know that I have but a short time left to live; I know that if my husband had listened to me before, I should now be in Italy and, possibly, no, certainly, well by this time. All told him so. Well, what is to be done? Evidently this is God's will. All of us have sinned much, I know that; but I hope for God's mercy, — all will be forgiven, no doubt all will be forgiven. I try to understand myself. I have many sins to answer for, my dear. But, oh, how much I have had to suffer for them! I have endeavoured patiently to bear my suffering — "

"Shall I call in the father, my dear? You will feel more at ease after communion," said her cousin.

The patient bent her head in token of consent.

"O God! Forgive me, sinful woman," she whispered.

Her cousin went out and beckoned to the father.

"She is an angel!" she said to the husband, with tears in her eyes. The husband burst out into tears; the priest went through the door; the old woman was still in a swoon, and in the first room everything grew absolutely quiet. Five minutes later the priest issued from the room and, taking off the chasuble, straightened out his hair.

"Thank God, she is calmer now," he said. "She wishes to see you."

The cousin and the husband went in. The patient was weeping softly, looking at the holy image.

"I congratulate you, my dear," said the husband.

"Thank you! How well I feel now! What inexpressible joy I am experiencing now," said the patient, and a soft smile played on her thin lips. "How merciful God is! Is it not so? He is merciful and all-powerful!" She again, with an expression of eager entreaty, looked with her tearful eyes at the image.

Then she suddenly seemed to recall something. She made signs to her husband to come nearer.

"You never want to do what I ask you," she said, in a feeble and displeased voice.

Her husband, craning his neck, listened to her humbly.

"What is it, my dear?"

"How many times have I told you that these doctors know nothing, that there are simple healing women who cure — The father told me — a burgher — Send for him!"

"For whom, my dear?"

"My God, he does not want to understand me!" The sick woman frowned and closed her eyes.

The doctor walked over to her and touched her pulse. It was beating perceptibly slower and slower. He winked to the husband. The patient noticed this gesture and

looked about her in fright. Her cousin turned away and burst out into tears.

"Do not weep! Do not torment yourself and me," said the patient, "for that takes my last quiet away."

"You are an angel!" said her cousin, kissing her hand.

"No, kiss me here! Only dead people are kissed on the hand. My God! My God!"

That same evening the patient was a corpse, and the body in the coffin stood in the parlour of the large house. In the large room with the closed doors a sexton sat all alone, reading the psalms of David through his nose and in an even voice. The bright flame of the wax tapers in tall silver candlesticks fell upon the pale brow of the deceased woman, upon her heavy wax-like hands, and upon the petrified folds of the shroud, rising terribly at the knees and toes. The sexton read evenly, without understanding his words, and the words sounded strangely and died away in the quiet room. Occasionally the sounds of children's voices and their treads reached him from a distant room.

"Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled," so ran the psalm. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to dust. Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created and renew the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever."

The face of the deceased woman was stern and majestic. There was no motion, neither in the clean, cold forehead, nor in the firmly compressed lips. She was all attention! But did she at all understand these great words now?

IV.

A MONTH later, a stone chapel rose over the grave of the deceased woman. Over the driver's grave there was still no stone, and only the light green grass sprouted on the mound which served as the only token of the past existence of the man.

"It will be a sin, Seréga," once said the cook at the station, "if you don't buy Fédor a stone. You kept saying that it was winter, but why do you not keep your word now? Wasn't I a witness to it? He once came to you to ask for it; if you do not buy it, he will come again and will choke you."

"But I do not deny it," replied Seréga. "I will buy a stone, as I said I would, and I will give a rouble and a half for it. I have not forgotten it, but I must fetch it from town. The first time I am there, I will buy it."

"You ought to put up a cross at least, that's what," interposed an old driver, "for it is bad to leave it as it is. You are wearing his boots."

"Where shall I get the cross? I can't dress one out of a billet of wood."

"What nonsense you talk! You can't dress one from a billet! Take an axe and go early in the morning into the grove, and then you will be able to dress one. Cut down an ash, or something like that, and there you have a cross. What sense is there in filling the forester with brandy? You can't be ready to treat them for every trifle. The other day I broke an axletree, so I trimmed

me a fine new one, and nobody said a word to me about it."

Early in the morning, just at daybreak, Seréga took an axe and went into the grove.

On everything lay the cold, dull shroud of the still settling dew, not illuminated by the sun. The east was visibly growing brighter, reflecting its feeble light on the vault of heaven veiled by thin clouds. Not one blade of grass underfoot nor one leaf in the upper branches of the trees were stirring. Only the occasional sounds of wings in the thick foliage of the trees or a rustling sound on the ground broke the silence of the woods. Suddenly a strange sound, unfamiliar to Nature, was borne through the forest and died away in the clearing. But the sound was heard again and was evenly repeated below, upon the trunk of one of the immovable trees. One of the tops shook in an unusual way; its juicy leaves whispered something, and a whitethroat, which was sitting on one of its branches, twice flitted about, uttering a whistling sound, and, jerking up its tail, seated itself on another tree.

The axe sounded duller and duller below; the sap-filled chips flew upon the dew-covered grass, and a slight crackling was heard above the strokes. The tree trembled in all its body, bent down and swiftly straightened itself, swaying frightened on its root. For a moment everything was silent; but the tree bent down once more, there was heard a crackling in its trunk, and, breaking boughs and lowering its branches, it crashed with its top against the damp earth. The sounds of the axe and of the steps died down. The whitethroat whistled and flitted higher up. The twig which it brushed with its wings swayed to and fro a little while and came to a rest, like the others, with all its leaves. The trees still more joyously displayed their motionless branches in the newly cleared place.

The first rays of the sun, piercing the translucent cloud, gleamed in the heaven and flashed through earth and sky. The mist began to quiver in waves in the ravines; the dew, sparkling, played on the verdure; translucent, whitened cloudlets scudded over the deepening azure of the vault. Birds stirred in the thicket and, as though lost, twittered about some happiness; the lush leaves joyfully and calmly whispered to each other in the tops, and the branches of the living trees slowly, majestically rustled over the dead, prostrate tree.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS

A Novel

1859

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS

A Novel

PART THE FIRST

I.

We were wearing mourning for our mother, who had died in the autumn, and were living all alone, with Kátya and Sónya, in the country.

Kátya was an old friend of the house, the governess who had brought us all up and whom I remembered and loved as far back as I could remember myself. Sónya was my younger sister. We passed a gloomy and sad winter in our old house at Pokróvskoe. The weather was cold and windy, so that snow-drifts were blown higher than the windows; the panes were nearly all the time frozen over and dim, and we went nowhere almost the whole winter. We had but few visitors, and such as came did not add merriment and joy to our house. All had sad faces; all spoke softly, as though afraid to waken somebody; they did not laugh, but sighed and frequently wept, as they looked at me, and especially at little Sónya in her black little dress. Death seemed still to be felt in the house; the sorrow and terror of death was still in the atmosphere. Mamma's room

was closed, and I shivered and something drew me to look into that cold and empty room every time I passed by it on my way to bed.

I was then seventeen years old; it was during that very year of my mother's death that she had intended to settle in the city in order to bring me out. My mother's loss was a great sorrow for me, but I must confess that back of this sorrow there was also the consciousness that I was young and pretty, as all were telling me, and that I was, in the meanwhile, killing the second winter in solitude in the country. Before the end of winter this feeling of pining and solitude and of simple tedium increased to such a degree that I did not leave my room, did not open the piano, and did not take a book into my hands. When Kátya tried to persuade me to do something or other, I replied: "I do not feel like it, I can't," while a voice within me said: "Why should I? Why do something when my best time is passing fruitlessly? Why?" And to this "why" there was no other answer than tears.

I was told that I was getting thinner and less pretty during that time, but that did not even interest me. Why? For whom? It seemed to me that my whole life would have to pass in this lonely wilderness and helpless pining, from which I myself, alone, had no strength and even no desire to get away. Toward the end of winter Kátya began to be afraid for me and made up her mind to take me abroad at all costs. But to do this money was needed, whereas we hardly knew what there was left after mother, and from day to day waited for the arrival of the guardian, who was to look into our affairs.

In March the guardian came.

"Thank God!" Kátya once said to me, while I was walking from one corner to another like a shadow, without work, without thoughts, without desires. "Sergyéy Mikháylych has arrived. He has sent somebody to

inquire about us, and he wanted to be here for dinner. Bestir yourself, dear Másha," she added, "or else what will he think of you? He used to love you all so."

Sergyéy Mikháylych was our near neighbour and a friend of our deceased father, though he was much younger than he. Not only did his arrival change our plans and give us a chance of leaving the country, but I had been accustomed from childhood to love and respect him, and Kátya, advising me to bestir myself, had rightly guessed that it would pain me more to appear in an unfavourable light before Sergyéy Mikháylych than before any other of my acquaintances. Not only did I, like everybody else in the house, beginning with Kátya and Sónya, his godchild, and ending with the last coachman, love him by habit, but he had also a special meaning for me by a few words which mamma had used in reference to me. She had said that she would wish such a husband for me. At that time it had appeared strange and even disagreeable to me; my hero was somebody quite different from him. My hero was thin, haggard, pale, and sad, while Sergyéy Mikháylych was no longer in his first youth, tall, plump, and, as I thought, always merry. Yet, although these words of mamma's fell deep in my imagination as long back as six years ago, when I was but eleven, and he spoke "thou" to me, and played with me, and called me "violet," I sometimes asked myself with a pang of terror what I should do if he suddenly wanted to marry me.

Sergyéy Mikháylych arrived before dinner, for which Kátya added cream pastry and spinach sauce. I saw him through the window driving up to the house in a small sleigh, but the moment he drove around the corner I hastened into the drawing-room and intended to pretend that I had not expected him. But when I heard the thud of his feet in the antechamber, his loud voice, and Kátya's steps, I could not hold myself, and went out to

meet him. He was holding Kátya's hand, and speaking loud and smiling. When he saw me he stopped and for some time looked at me, without greeting me. I felt ill at ease, and I knew that I was blushing.

"Oh, is it really you?" he said, in his determined and simple manner, waving his hands and coming up to me. "How can one change so? How you have grown! A real violet! You are now a whole rose-bush."

He took my hand into his large hand and pressed it firmly and sincerely, without giving me pain. I thought he was going to kiss my hand, and so I bent down to him, but he again pressed it and looked me straight in the eye with his firm and cheerful glance.

I had not seen him for six years. He had changed much; he had aged, looked blacker, and his face was all overgrown with side-whiskers, which did not at all become him; but his manner was as simple as before, and he had the same open, honest, large-featured face, intelligent, sparkling eyes, and gracious, almost childlike, smile.

Five minutes later he ceased being a guest, and became a familiar friend to all of us, even to the people, who, to judge from their readiness to serve him, were very much delighted with his arrival.

He acted quite differently from the neighbours who came after mother's demise and who considered it necessary to keep silent and weep, while staying at our house; he, on the contrary, was talkative, merry, and did not say a word about mamma, so that at first this indifference appeared to me strange and even indecent in a man who was so near to us. But later I understood that it was not indifference, but sincerity, and I was thankful to him for it. In the evening Kátya sat down in the old place in the drawing-room, as in mamma's lifetime, to pour out tea; Sónya and I sat down by her side; old Grigóri brought him papa's old pipe, which he had found, and he, as of old, began to pace up and down in the room.

"What terrible changes have taken place in this house, when you come to think of it!" he said, stopping.

"Yes," said Kátya, with a sigh, and, covering the samovár with the lid, looked at him, ready to burst out into tears.

"I suppose you remember your papa," he turned to me.

"Not very much," I replied.

"How good it would have been for you now if he were with you!" he said, looking softly and thoughtfully at my head above my eyes. "I was very fond of your father!" he added, softer still, and I thought that his eyes became brighter.

"And then God took her!" said Kátya. She immediately put a napkin over the teapot, took out her handkerchief, and began to weep.

"Yes, terrible changes have taken place in this house," he repeated, turning away. "Sónya, let me see your toys," he added, after awhile, and went into the parlour. I looked at Kátya, my eyes filled with tears, as he went out.

"He is such a fine friend!" she said.

Indeed, I felt somehow warm and good from the sympathy of this strange and good man.

In the drawing-room could be heard Sónya's scream, and his playing with Sónya. I sent his tea in to him; we could hear him sitting down at the piano and striking the keys with Sónya's hands.

"Márya Aleksándrovna!" was heard his voice. "Come here, and play us something!"

It was a pleasure to have him address me in such a simple and familiarly commanding tone; I got up and walked over to him.

"Play this," he said, opening to a page of a book of Beethoven's sonatas, on which was the adagio of *Quasi una fantasia*. "We shall see how you play," he added, going away with his glass to the corner of the parlour.

For some reason I felt that I could not refuse him

and make excuses about my poor playing! I submissively sat down at the piano and began to play as well as I could, although I was afraid of his opinion, knowing that he understood and loved music. The adagio was in keeping with that sentiment of reminiscence, called forth by the conversation at tea, and I think I played it fairly well. He would not let me play the scherzo.

"No, you do not play this well," he said, coming up to me, "so leave it alone; but the first was not bad. You seem to understand music."

This moderate praise pleased me so much that I even blushed. It was so novel and agreeable for me to have him, the friend and equal of my father, speak with me seriously when left alone, and not as with a child, as he used to. Kátya went up-stairs to put Sónya to bed, and we were left alone in the parlour.

He told me about my father, how he had met him, and how they lived together when I was still sitting at my books and toys; and my father for the first time, in his stories, presented himself to me as a simple and dear man, such as I had not known him before. He also asked me what I liked, what I read, what I intended to do, and gave me his advice. He was now to me not a joker and merrymaker, teasing me and making toys for me, but a serious, simple, and loving man, for whom I involuntarily felt respect and sympathy. I felt light and comfortable, and, at the same time, I was conscious of an involuntary tension, while speaking with him. I was afraid of every word of mine; I was so anxious personally to gain his love which I had so far acquired by dint of being my father's daughter.

Having put Sónya to bed, Kátya joined us. She complained to him of my apathy, of which I had not told him anything.

"She has not told me the main thing," he said, smiling and reproachfully shaking his head at me.

"What was there to tell?" I said. "It is very tedious, and it will pass." (I really felt now that not only would my tedium pass, but that it had passed already, and that there had been none at all.)

"It is not good not to be able to endure solitude," he said. "Are you really a young lady?"

"Of course I am," I replied, laughing.

"No, she is not a nice young lady who is alive only so long as people admire her, and who lets herself go and to whom nothing is dear the moment she is left alone. Everything is for show for her, and nothing for herself."

"A fine opinion you have of me," I said, just to say something.

"No!" he said, after a moment's silence. "There is good reason why you should resemble your father. There is in you something," and his kindly, attentive glance again flattered me and embarrassed me pleasurably.

Only now I noticed that his face, which was at first impression merry, had back of it a peculiar glance,—at first clear, and then ever more attentive and slightly sad.

"You ought not and should not feel dull," he said. "You have music which you understand, books, studies; you have a whole life ahead of you, for which you can prepare yourself now, in order not to regret it later. In a year it will be too late."

He spoke to me like a father or uncle, and I felt that he constantly held himself back in order to be on a level with me. It was both aggravating to me to see him regard me as below him, and agreeable to see him try to be something different just for my sake alone.

The rest of the evening he spoke with Kátya about business.

"Good-bye, dear friends," he said, getting up and walking over to me and taking my hand.

"When shall we see each other again?" asked Kátya.

"In the spring," he replied, still holding my hand.

"Now I will go to Danílovka (our other village); there I will see how matters stand and will do what I can; then I will travel to Moscow about my own business, and in the summer we shall meet again."

"Why are you going away for so long?" I said, very sorrowfully. Indeed, I had hoped to see him every day, and I suddenly felt so miserable and so terribly afraid lest my ennui should return. Evidently this was all expressed in my glance and tone of voice.

"Busy yourself as much as possible, and don't become a hypochondriac," he said, as I thought, in too cold and simple a voice. "In the spring I will examine you," he added, letting my hand go, and without looking at me.

In the antechamber, where we were standing to see him off, he hurriedly put on his fur coat and again surveyed me with his glance. "He is trying in vain!" I thought. "Does he really think it gives me such pleasure for him to look at me? He is a good man, a very good man — but that is all."

Still, that night Kátya and I did not fall asleep for a long time, and we spoke not of him, but of where we should pass the coming summer, and where and how we should live in the winter. The terrible question "why?" no longer presented itself to me. It seemed very simple and clear to me that one must live in order to be happy, and the future offered much happiness to me. It seemed as though our old, gloomy Pokróvskoe house were suddenly filled with life and light.

II.

In the meantime spring came. My former pining was gone and was exchanged for a vernal meditative pining of incomprehensible hopes and desires. Although I lived differently from what I did in the beginning of winter, and busied myself with Sónya and music and reading, I frequently went into the garden and long, long strolled all alone down the avenues, or sat down on a bench, thinking God knows of what, and wishing and hoping God knows for what. At times I passed whole nights, especially moonlit nights, until morning at the window of my room; at times I, in nothing but my bodice, softly stole away from Kátya to walk into the garden and run over the dew down to the pond, and once I even went into the field and all alone walked around the garden.

Now it is hard for me to recall and comprehend the dreams which at that time filled my imagination. When I do recall them I can hardly believe that those really were my dreams. They were then strange and remote from life.

At the end of May, Sergyéy Mikháylych returned from his journey, as he had promised.

He arrived in the evening, when we did not expect him. We were sitting on the terrace and were getting ready to drink tea. The garden was clad in verdure, and the nightingales had taken up their abode in the clumps of bushes as early as St. Peter's Fast. The curly lilac bushes here and there seemed to be strewn on top with

something white and lilac. These flowers were just getting ready to open out. The foliage in the birch avenue was all translucent in the setting sun. On the terrace there was a fresh shade. Heavy evening dew was soon to fall on the grass. In the courtyard beyond the garden could be heard the last sounds of day, the noise of the cattle driven to shelter. Fool Níkon was driving a barrel along the path before the terrace, and a cold stream of water from the sprinkler blackened the dug-up earth near the trunks of trees, the dahlias, and the supports.

On our terrace, on a white table-cloth, shone and boiled a brightly burnished samovár, and stood cream, cracknels, and pastry. Kátya was with her plump hands carefully wiping off the cups. I could not wait for the tea, having grown hungry after my bath, and was eating bread with thick, fresh cream. I wore a gingham blouse with open sleeves, and my head was wrapped with a kerchief over my wet hair. Kátya was the first to see him through the window.

"Ah, Sergyéy Mikháylych!" she exclaimed, "we had just been speaking of you."

I got up and wanted to go away in order to change my clothes, but he met me just as I was at the door.

"No ceremonies in the country, please!" he said, looking at my head wrapped in the kerchief, and smiling. "You are not ashamed before Grigóri, and I am really like Grigóri to you." But it was just then that it appeared to me that he was not looking at me at all as Grigóri did, and I was embarrassed.

"I will be back at once," I said, going away from him.

"I see nothing wrong in this!" he called out after me. "You look just like a young peasant woman."

"How strangely he looked at me," I thought, hastily changing my clothes up-stairs. "I am glad he has come: it will be jollier now." After taking a look at myself in the mirror I merrily ran down-stairs, and, without conceal-

ing my haste, walked out on the terrace out of breath. He was sitting at the table and was telling Kátya about our affairs. He looked at me and smiled, and continued his conversation. Our affairs were, according to him, in excellent condition. All we had to do was to stay through the summer in the country, and then we could go to St. Petersburg for Sónya's education, or abroad.

"Yes, if you could go with us abroad," said Kátya, "for we shall be as alone there as in the woods."

"Oh, how I should like to travel around the world with you!" he said, half in jest and half in earnest.

"All right, come, let us go around the world!"

He smiled and shook his head.

"And your mother? And business?" he said. "Well, that is another matter. Tell me how you have passed your time. Have you again been a hypochondriac?"

When I told him that in his absence I was busy and did not feel lonely, and Kátya confirmed my words, he praised me and caressed me with his eyes like a child, as though he had a right to do it. It seemed to me a matter of necessity to tell him in detail and with absolute sincerity the good I had done, and to make my confession to him of all that which might have displeased him. The evening was so charming that after tea we remained on the terrace, and the conversation was so interesting to me that I did not notice how all human voices slowly died down around us. On all sides the flowers emitted a greater fragrance; abundant dew watered the grass; a nightingale sang out his trills in a lilac bush near by, and again grew silent when he heard our voices; the starry heaven looked as though it had been lowered over us.

I noticed that it was getting dark only because a bat suddenly flew in noiselessly under the canvas of the terrace and whirred about my white kerchief. I pressed against the wall and was on the point of crying out, but the bat just as noiselessly and swiftly dashed out from

underneath the awning and disappeared in the semi-darkness of the garden.

"How I love your Pokróvskoe estate!" he said, interrupting the conversation. "I should like to sit all my life on this terrace."

"All right, sit here," said Kátya.

"Yes, sit here, but life does not sit."

"Why do you not get married?" asked Kátya. "You would make an excellent husband."

"Because I like to sit?" And he laughed out loud. "No, Katerína Kárlovna, neither you nor I will ever marry. They have all long ago quit looking upon me as a man who can be married off. And I myself gave it up long before that. Truly, since then I have been feeling so well."

I thought that he was saying this with unnatural zeal.

"I declare! You have passed thirty-six years of your life this way," said Kátya.

"I should say I have," he continued. "All I care for now is to be sitting in one spot, whereas for marrying something else is demanded. Ask her," he added, indicating me with his head. "These girls have to be married off, and we will have our joy looking at them."

In his tone was expressed sadness and tension, which did not escape me. He was silent for a moment; neither I nor Kátya said anything.

"Suppose, now," he continued, turning around on his chair, "I should all of a sudden by some unfortunate mischance marry a seventeen-year-old girl, say Mash — Márya Aleksándrovna. This is a beautiful example, I am glad it is such — this is the very best example."

I laughed and could not for the life of me make out why he was glad that something was such —

"Well, tell me in truth, with your hand on your heart," he said, jokingly addressing me, "would it not be a misfortune for you to unite your life with an old man, who

has lived his life, who only wants to sit, while God knows what is brewing within you and what you want?

I felt ill at ease and was silent, not knowing what to answer.

"I am not proposing to you," he said, laughing; "but do tell me, in all sincerity, you certainly are not dreaming of such a husband when you walk alone through the garden walks in the evening?"

"It is not a misfortune —" I began.

"Well, but not the thing," he finished the sentence.

"Yes, but I may be mista —"

Again he interrupted me.

"Well, you see, she is quite right, and I am thankful to her for her sincerity, and am glad to have talked about it with her. More than that, it would be the greatest misfortune for me, too," he added.

"How strange you are! Nothing has changed," said Kátya and went out of the terrace to order the table set for supper.

Both of us grew silent after Kátya had left us, and around us everything was quiet. Only a nightingale, no longer in the broken, indecisive trills of the evening, but in night-fashion, calmly and without haste, drowned the whole garden with his sounds, while another, for the first time this evening, answered him from the ravine in the distance. The nearer nightingale grew silent, as though listening for a moment to him, and then burst forth more distinctly and tensely into a roll of sonorous trills. These voices resounded with majestic calm in their, to us, unfamiliar nocturnal world. The gardener went to the hothouse to sleep, and the steps of his thick boots, retreating, rang out upon the path. Somebody twice whistled piercingly at the foot of a hill, and all was quiet again. One could barely hear the swaying of the leaves; the canvas of the terrace flapped, and, hovering in the air, the odour of something fragrant was wafted

and spread upon the terrace. I felt awkward keeping silent after what had been said, but I did not know what to say. I looked at him. His sparkling eyes glanced at me in the semi-darkness.

"It is fine to live in the world!" he muttered.

I for some reason drew a sigh.

"What?"

"It is fine to live in the world!" I repeated.

Again we were silent, and again I felt ill at ease. I could not get rid of the idea that I had grieved him by agreeing with him that he was old, and I wanted to console him, but I did not know how to do it."

"Good-bye," he said, rising, "my mother is waiting supper for me. I have hardly seen her to-day."

"I wanted to play a new sonata for you," I said.

"Another time," he said, coldly, as I thought.

"Good-bye!"

It now seemed to me even more than before that I had offended him, and I was sorry for him. Kátya and I took him as far as the veranda, and we stood in the yard, looking down the road on which he disappeared. When the tramp of his horses died down I again walked around the house to the terrace and again began to look at the garden, and in the dewy mist, in which the sounds of the night hovered, I for a long time saw and heard all that which I wished to see and hear.

He arrived a second, and a third time, and the awkwardness produced by the strange conversation which had taken place between us entirely disappeared and was never again renewed. In the course of the whole summer he came to see us two or three times a week; I became so accustomed to him that when he stayed away for any length of time I felt ill at ease all alone, and I was angry with him and found that he acted badly in leaving me. He treated me like a dear young companion, asked all kinds of questions, invited a most intimate frankness,

advised, encouraged, and sometimes scolded and stopped me. Yet, notwithstanding all his efforts to be continually on a level with me, I felt that in addition to what I knew of him there was still a whole foreign world to which he deemed it necessary not to admit me, and this more powerfully maintained my respect for him and attracted me to him. I knew from Kátya and from neighbours that, in addition to his care for his old mother, with whom he was living, in addition to his estate and our guardianship, he had some kind of business with the affairs of the nobility, for which he suffered much annoyance; but how he looked upon all that, what his convictions, plans, and hopes were, I never was able to find out from him. The moment I turned the conversation to his affairs, he frowned in his peculiar manner, as though to say, "Please stop, — that does not concern you," and immediately changed the subject. At first that provoked me, but later I became so used to speaking only of matters which concerned me, that I found it quite natural.

Another thing which at first displeased me and later, on the contrary, gave me pleasure, was his complete indifference and seeming contempt for my looks. He never hinted, either by a word or a glance, that I was good-looking; on the contrary, he frowned and laughed whenever they called me pretty in his presence. He even liked to find fault with my appearance and teased me about it. My fashionable dresses and coiffure, with which Kátya liked to adorn me on holidays, only called forth his ridicule, which grieved good Kátya and at first baffled me. Kátya, who had made up her mind that he liked me, was quite unable to understand how a man could help wishing to see the woman he liked in the best light possible. But I soon discovered what it was he wanted.

He wanted to believe that I had no coquetry. When I came to understand that, there was actually not a shade

of coquetry left in me as regards my attire, my headdress, and my movements; but instead of that there appeared a coquetry of simplicity, showing the white basting thread, at a time when I did not yet know how to be really simple.

I knew that he loved me, but I did not yet ask myself whether as a child or as a woman. I valued this love, and, feeling that he considered me to be the best girl in the world, I could not help wishing that he should abide in this deception, and I involuntarily deceived him; but, deceiving him, I myself grew to be better. I felt that it was better and worthier for me to express to him the best sides of my soul, than of my body. I thought that he had at once properly valued my hair, hands, face, manners, whatever they were, good or bad, and that he knew them so well that I could add nothing to my exterior, but the desire to deceive. My soul he did not know, because he loved it, because it all the time grew and developed, and here I could deceive him, and so I did.

How free I felt in his presence when I came to see that! My groundless confusion and embarrassment of movements entirely disappeared in me. I felt that whether he saw me in front, from a side, sitting, or standing, with my hair up or down, — he knew all of me, and I thought that he was satisfied with me such as I was. I think that if he, contrary to his habit, had suddenly said to me, as others had, that I had a pretty face, I should not have been pleased in the least. On the other hand, how bright and cheerful I felt when, after something I might have said, he looked fixedly at me and exclaimed in a touched voice, to which he tried to give a jesting turn:

"Yes, yes, there is something in you. You are a fine girl, I must tell you."

And for what did I receive such praise, which filled my heart with pride and merriment? For saying that I

sympathized with Grigóri's love for his grandchild, or for being moved to tears by a poem or novel which I had read, or for preferring Beethoven to Schulhoff. I wonder by what extraordinary sense I guessed what was good and what I ought to love, although at that time I had absolutely no knowledge of what was good and what ought to be loved.

He did not like the greater part of my former habits and tastes, and it sufficed for him to indicate by a motion of his brow, or by a glance, that he did not like that which I was going to say, or for him to make his peculiar, pitying, slightly contemptuous gesture, in order that I should immediately imagine that I no longer loved that which I had loved heretofore. At times he would be on the point of giving me some advice, when I would think that I already knew what he was going to say. He would ask me something, looking me in the eye, and his glance would extract from me the very thought which he wished. All my thoughts, all my feelings, were at that time not my own, but his thoughts and feelings, which had suddenly been made mine, and had passed into my life and had illumined it.

Quite imperceptibly to myself I began to look with different eyes at everything: at Kátya, at our servants, at Sónya, at myself, and at my occupations. The books which before I had been reading, in order to kill time, suddenly became one of my best pleasures of life, simply because he and I had talked about the books, had read them together, and he had brought them to me.

Before, my occupations with Sónya, the lessons I gave her, were a hard obligation for me, which I endeavoured to carry out from a sense of duty. He watched a lesson, and it became a joy for me to follow Sónya's progress. Before, it seemed impossible for me to learn by rote a whole musical composition, but now, knowing that he would hear me, and probably praise me, I would play one

passage forty times in succession, so that poor Kátya stuffed her ears with cotton, while I did not get tired at all. Even the same old sonatas now phrased themselves differently, and came out very different and much better.

Even Kátya, whom I knew as I knew myself, and whom I loved, suddenly changed in my eyes. Only now I understood that she was not at all obliged to be a mother, friend, and slave to us, such as she was. I understood all the self-sacrifice and loyalty of this loving being; I understood all I owed her, and I loved her more than ever.

He also taught me to look quite differently from the way I had before upon our people, the peasants, the manorial servants, the girls. It may seem laughable to say so, but up to my seventeenth year I had lived among these people a greater stranger to them than to people I had never seen; it had never occurred to me that these people loved, hoped, and pitied, like myself. Our garden, our groves, our fields, which I had known so long, suddenly became new and beautiful to me. He was right in saying that there is but one undoubted happiness in life, and that was to live for another. Then that seemed strange to me, and I did not understand it; but this conviction had begun to penetrate my heart before it had reached my head.

He revealed to me a whole life of joys in the present, without changing anything in my life, without adding anything but himself to every impression. Everything which since my childhood had been speechless about me now received life. It was enough for him to come in order that all should become eloquent and seek entrance into my soul, filling it with happiness.

Frequently during this summer did I go up-stairs to my room and lie down on my bed, and instead of my former vernal pining, desires, and hopes of the future, the trepidation of the happiness in the present took possession of

me. I could not fall asleep, got up, seated myself on Kátya's bed, and told her that I was absolutely happy, which, as I now well remember, it was not at all necessary to tell her: she could see it herself. But she told me that she, too, did not need anything, and was very happy, and kissed me. I believed her, because it seemed to me so necessary and just that all should be happy. But Kátya had time to think of sleep, and she frequently pretended to be angry, and drove me away from her bed, in order to go to sleep; while I for a long time tried to analyze what it was that made me so happy. At times I got up and prayed; I prayed with my own words, in order to thank God for the happiness which He had given me.

It was quiet in the room: Kátya breathed evenly in her sleep; the watch ticked near her; and I turned around and whispered words, or crossed myself and kissed the cross on my neck. The door was closed; the shutters were in the window; a fly or a gnat, swaying, buzzed in one place. I wished I would never have to leave the room; I did not want the morning to come; I did not want this soulful atmosphere which surrounded me ever to be dispelled. It seemed to me that my dreams, thoughts, and prayers were living beings, living with me here in the darkness, flitting about my bed, standing over me. Every thought was his thought, and every feeling was his feeling. I did not know then that it was love; I thought that it could always be so, that this sentiment could be had for the asking.

III.

ONE day during the harvest, Kátya and Sónya and I went after dinner to the garden, to our favourite bench in the shade of lindens above the ravine, beyond which the view opened on the forest and the field. Sergyéy Mikháylych had not been with us for three days, and we were expecting him on that day, the more so since our clerk said that he had promised to come out to the field. At about two o'clock we saw him riding out on horseback to the rye-field. Kátya sent for peaches and cherries, of which he was very fond, looked at me with a smile, lay down on the bench, and dozed off. I broke off a flat, crooked branch of a linden-tree, with lush leaves and juicy bark, which wet my hand, and, fanning Kátya with it, continued to read, all the time tearing myself away from the book, in order to look at the field road over which he had to reach us. Sónya was building an arbour for her dolls at the root of an old linden-tree.

The day was hot and windless, and evaporations rose from the ground; the clouds gathered and grew black,—a storm had been threatening since morning. I was agitated, as always before a storm. After noon the clouds began to scatter along the edges; the sun swam out upon the clear sky; only in one corner were there some peals of thunder, and through a heavy cloud which stood over the horizon and mingled with the dust on the fields, now and then pale zigzags of lightning flashed, reaching down to the ground. It was evident that the storm would scatter for the day, at least in our region.

On the road, which could be seen in spots back of the

garden, uninterruptedly passed now large creaking wagons with sheaves, in slow procession, and now empty wagons swiftly coming toward them with a clatter, while legs quivered and shirts fluttered. The dense dust was neither carried off, nor settled, but stood beyond the wicker fence between the translucent foliage of the garden trees.

Farther away on the threshing floor, the same voices were heard, the same creaking of the wheels, and the same yellow sheaves, which slowly passed by the fence, flew into the air, and under my eyes grew up oval houses, with their sharp, clearly defined roofs, and the figures of the peasants, swarming upon them. In front, on the dusty field, also moved carts, and also could be seen mellow sheaves, and from the distance were also borne the sounds of the carts, of the voices, and of the songs.

The harvested field became opener and opener on one side, with balks overgrown with wormwood. On the right, down below, on the disorderly, harvested field, could be seen the bright dresses of the sheaf-binding women, bending down and swinging their arms, and the disorderly field was cleared off, and beautiful sheaves were stacked in many places. It looked as though suddenly summer had under my eyes changed to autumn. Dust and oppressive heat were everywhere, except in our favourite spot in the garden. The labouring people spoke, dinned, and moved about on all sides, in this dust and the sweltering heat of the burning sun.

Kátya snored so sweetly under the white cambric handkerchief, on our cool bench; the black, shining cherries looked so luscious on the plate; our garments were so fresh and clean; the water in the pitcher sparkled so merrily in the sun, and I was so happy!

"What is to be done?" thought I. "Is it my fault that I am so happy? But how shall I share my happiness? How and to whom shall I give all of myself and all my happiness?"

The sun had disappeared behind the tops of the birch avenue; the dust was settling in the field; the distance could be seen more distinctly and brightly under the lateral illumination; the clouds had entirely scattered; in the yard of the threshing floor three new roofs of ricks could be seen, and the peasants had gone down from them; the carts, with loud shouts, hurried by, apparently for the last time; the women, with rakes over their shoulders and sheaf-twine in their belts, went home with loud singing, and Sergyéy Mikháylych was still not with us, although I had seen him long ago riding up the hill. Suddenly his figure appeared on the avenue, in the opposite direction from where I was expecting him (he had ridden around the ravine). He was walking toward me with rapid steps, his happy face beaming, and his cap held in his hand. Seeing that Kátya was asleep, he compressed his lips, closed his eyes, and walked up on tiptoe; I noticed at once that he was in that special mood of groundless merriment of which I was so fond in him, and which we denominated "wild transport." He was just like a schoolboy who had got away from his studies: his whole being, from his countenance to his feet, breathed contentment, happiness, and childlike vivacity.

"Good evening, young violet! How are you? Well?" he said in a whisper, walking over to me and pressing my hand. "I am feeling fine," he replied to my question. "I am thirteen years old to-day, and I want to play horses, and climb trees."

"Are you in wild transport?" I said, looking at his laughing eyes, and feeling that this "wild transport" was being communicated to me.

"Yes," he answered, winking with one eye and repressing a smile. "Only why should you strike the nose of Katerína Kárlovna?"

I had not noticed, as I was looking at him and continuing to fan with the branch, that I had knocked off

the handkerchief from Kátya, and now was brushing her face with the leaves. I burst out laughing.

"And she will say that she did not sleep," I said, in a whisper, as if not to waken Kátya, but in reality because it simply gave me pleasure to speak in a whisper to him.

He moved his lips as if in imitation of my whisper, as though I had spoken so softly that it was impossible to hear what I had said. Upon seeing the plate with the cherries, he grabbed it, as though by stealth, went up to Sónya under the linden, and sat down on her dolls. Sónya was at first angry, but he soon made up with her, and arranged a game with her, in which they had to contest in eating cherries.

"Do you want me to send for some more?" I said, "or let us go there ourselves!"

He took the plate, put some dolls upon it, and all three of us went up to the shed. Sónya ran, laughing, behind us, pulling his overcoat, to have him give her back her dolls. He gave them to her, and solemnly turned to me.

"Of course you are a violet," he said to me, still in a low voice, although there was no fear now of waking anybody. "The moment I came up to you after all this dust, heat, and work, I scented a violet, not a fragrant violet, you know, but that first, dark violet that smells of melting snow and vernal grass."

"Well, does everything about the estate go well?" I asked him, in order to conceal the joyful embarrassment which his words had produced in me."

"Excellently! These people are everywhere excellent. The more you know them the better you love them."

"Yes," I said, "before you came up I looked from the garden at the work, and I suddenly felt conscience-stricken because they were working, while I was so comfortable that —"

"Don't coquet with it, my friend," he interrupted me, suddenly looking seriously, but graciously, into my eyes. "This is a sacred matter. God preserve us from making a display of it!"

"I am saying this to you only."

"Yes, I know. Well, how are the cherries?"

The shed was closed, and there were no gardeners around (he had sent them all to work). Sónya ran away for the key, but he did not wait for her return, and climbed up at the corner, raised the netting, and jumped down on the other side.

"Do you want some?" I heard his voice from the other side. "Let me have the plate!"

"No, I want to pick some myself! I will go for the key," I said, "Sónya will not find it—"

But, at the same time, I wanted to see what he was doing, how he looked, how he moved, when supposing that he was not watched. I simply did not want at that time to let him for a minute out of my sight. I ran on tiptoe through the nettles around the shed, to the other side, which was lower, and, standing up on an empty barrel, so that the wall was lower than my breast, bent over into the shed. I surveyed the inside of the shed, with its old, bent trees and their broad, serrated leaves, from which hung down the heavy, luscious black cherries. I put my head under the netting, and back of a crooked bough of an old cherry-tree espied Sergyéy Mikháylych.

He, no doubt, thought that I had gone and that no one saw him. Taking off his hat and closing his eyes, he sat on the ruins of an old cherry-tree, and carefully rolled into a ball a piece of cherry gum. He suddenly shrugged his shoulders, opened his eyes, and, muttering something, smiled. That word and smile were so unlike him that I felt conscience-stricken for watching him secretly. I thought that the word was "Másha!" "Impossible!" I thought. "Dear Másha!" he repeated, more softly and

gently. Now I heard these two words quite distinctly. My heart beat so strongly and I was suddenly seized by such an agitating joy, as though it were a forbidden joy, that I grasped the wall with my hands in order not to fall and give myself away.

He heard my motion, looked around in fright, and, suddenly lowering his eyes, blushed crimson, like a child. He wanted to say something to me, but could not, and his face flushed again and again. Yet he smiled, looking at me. I, too, smiled. His whole face was agleam with joy. He was no longer the old uncle, caressing and instructing me; he now was my equal, who loved and feared me, and whom I loved and feared. We said nothing, and only looked at each other. Suddenly he frowned; his smile and the sparkle of his eyes disappeared, and he again turned coldly and in a fatherly way toward me, as though we were doing something bad, and he had come to his senses and advised me to come to my senses.

"You had better climb down, or you will hurt yourself," he said. "And fix your hair! Just see what you look like!"

"Why does he pretend? Why does he want to give me pain?" I thought, indignantly. At that moment I was seized by an insuperable desire to embarrass him once more and to exert my strength on him.

"No, I want to pick them myself," I said, and, taking hold of the nearest branch, jumped with my feet on the wall. Before he had any time to support me, I jumped to the ground inside the shed.

"What foolish things you are doing!" he exclaimed, blushing again and, under the appearance of anger, trying to conceal his embarrassment. "You might have hurt yourself! And how will you get out of here?"

He was still more confused than before, but now this confusion of his no longer gave me pleasure, but frightened me. It was communicated to me; I blushed and,

avoiding him, and not knowing what to say, began to pick the cherries, though I had nothing to put them in. I reproached myself, I regretted, I was afraid, and I thought that I had ruined myself for ever in his eyes with my action. We were both silent, and both felt oppressed.

Sónya came running up with the key, and she took us out of this oppressive situation. For a long time afterward we did not speak to each other, and both addressed Sónya. When we returned to Kátya, who assured us that she had not slept, but had heard everything, I calmed down, and he tried again to strike his patronizing, paternal tone, but he no longer was successful in it, and did not deceive me. I now vividly recalled the conversation which had taken place between us a few days before.

Kátya had remarked how much easier it was for a man to love and express his love, than for a woman.

"A man can say that he loves, but a woman cannot," she said.

"But to me it seems that even a man must not and cannot say that he loves," he said.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because that will always be a lie. What kind of a discovery is it that a man loves? As if, when he says it, something clicks, — bang, — he loves. As if, the moment he pronounces the word, something unusual must happen, some phenomenon, — and they will fire off all the cannon. It seems to me," he continued, "that people who solemnly pronounce the words, 'I love you,' either deceive themselves, or, what is worse, deceive others."

"But how is a woman to find out that she is loved, if she is not told so?" Kátya asked.

"That I do not know," he replied. "Every man has his own words. If there is any sentiment, it will find

its expression. When I read novels I always imagine what a puzzled face Lieutenant Stryélski, or Alfred, must have when he says, 'I love you, Eleonora!' and thinks that suddenly something unusual will take place; nothing happens either to her or to him: the eyes and nose are the same, and everything is the same."

I even then, in this jest of his, felt something serious, which referred to me, but Kátya would not allow him to treat lightly the heroes of novels.

"Your eternal paradoxes," she said. "Tell me, in truth, have you never told a woman that you loved her?"

"I have never told one so, and have never thrown myself on one knee," he replied, smiling, "and I never will."

"He need not tell me that he loves me," I now thought, vividly recalling that conversation. "He loves me, I know it. All his attempts to appear indifferent will not change my belief."

He spoke very little with me all that evening, but in every word of his to Kátya and to Sónya, and in every motion and glance of his I saw love, and I did not doubt it. But I was provoked and felt pity for him because he considered it necessary to conceal his sentiment and to pretend being cold, when all was so evident, and when it was so easy and simple to be so impossibly happy. But I was tormented as if by a crime for having leaped down to him into the shed. It seemed to me that he would cease respecting me for it, and that he was angry with me.

After tea I went up to the piano, and he followed me.

"Play something! I have not heard you for quite awhile," he said, catching up with me in the drawing-room.

"I meant to, Sergyéy Mikháylych!" I said, suddenly looking him straight in the eye. "Are you not angry with me?"

"For what?" he asked.

"For not obeying you after dinner," I said, blushing.

He understood me, shook his head, and smiled. His glance said that I ought to be scolded, but that he did not feel himself equal to the task.

"There has been nothing, and we are friends again," I said, sitting down at the piano.

"Indeed we are!" he said.

In the large, high-studded room there were but two candles on the piano; the rest of space was merged in semi-darkness. A bright summer night peeped through the windows. Everything was quiet; only Kátya's intermittent steps creaked in the dark drawing-room, and his horse, hitched beneath the window, snorted and beat its hoofs against the burdocks.

He was sitting back of me, so that I could not see him; but everywhere, in the twilight of the room, in the sounds, in myself, I felt his presence. Every glance, every motion of his, which I did not see, reëchoed in my heart. I was playing a sonata-fantasia by Mozart, which he had brought me, and which I had studied up in his presence and for his sake. I was not thinking at all of what I was playing, but I think I played well, and I then thought that he liked it. I felt the joy which he was experiencing, and, without looking at him, I felt the glance which he directed at me from behind.

I looked around at him quite involuntarily, while continuing unconsciously to move my fingers. His head stood out against the glimmering background of the night. He was sitting with his head leaning on his arms and looking fixedly at me with his sparkling eyes. I smiled, seeing that glance, and stopped playing. He smiled, too, and reproachfully shook his head at my music, indicating that he wanted me to go on. When I was through, the moon had grown brighter and had risen high, and, in addition to the feeble light of the candles, another,

silvery light, which fell upon the floor, was coming in through the windows.

Kátya said that it was atrocious to stop in the best place, and that I had played badly; but he said that, on the contrary, I had never played so well as on that day, and began to walk from room to room, across the parlour to the drawing-room, and back again to the parlour, looking all the time at me and smiling. I, too, smiled; I even wanted to laugh for no cause whatever, so glad was I of something that had happened but awhile before. The moment he disappeared through the door, I embraced Kátya, with whom I was standing near the piano, and began to kiss her in my favourite spot, the plump neck under her chin; every time he returned I pretended to look serious, and with difficulty restrained a laugh.

"What shall we do with her to-day?" Kátya said to him.

He did not answer and only made fun of me. He knew what was going on within me.

"See what a night!" he said from the drawing-room, stopping in front of the door of the balcony opening into the garden —

We went up to him. It really was such a night as I never have seen since. The full moon stood back of us, over the house, so that it could not be seen, and half of the shadow of the roof, of the posts, and the canvas of the terrace, lay slantingly *en raccourci* on the sandy path and the greensward circle. Everything else was bright and bathed in the silver of the dew and of the moonlight. The broad flower-path, along one side of which lay slantingly the shadows of the dahlias and supports, was all lighted up and cold, sparkling with its unevenly crushed pebbles, and was lost in the mist and in the distance.

Back of the trees could be seen the bright roof of the hothouse, and a growing mist rose from the ravine. The lilac bushes, now somewhat stripped of their splendour,

were illuminated down to the branches. All the dew-drenched flowers could be distinguished one from the other. In the avenues the light and the shadow mingled in such a way that the avenues appeared not as trees and paths, but as transparent, swaying, and quivering houses. On the right, in the shadow of the house, everything was black, formless, and terrible. So much the more brightly rose from this darkness the fantastically spreading top of the poplar, which, for some reason, had stopped strangely not far from the house, way above in the bright light, instead of flying far away, into the receding bluish sky.

"Come, let us take a walk!" said I.

Kátya consented, but said that I ought to put on my galoshes.

"It is not necessary, Kátya," I said. "Sergyéy Mikháylych will give me his arm."

As though this could keep me from getting my feet wet! But at that time that was quite comprehensible to all three of us, and did not seem in the least strange. He had never before offered me his arm, but now I took it myself, and he did not find it strange. All that world, that garden, that air, were not as I knew them.

As I looked down the avenue, in which we were walking, it seemed to me that it was impossible to go any farther, that there was the end of the world of possibilities, that all that must for ever be fettered in its beauty. But we moved on, and the magic wall of beauty receded, and let us in, and there, too, it seemed, were our familiar garden, trees, paths, and dry leaves. And, indeed, we walked over the paths, stepped on the circles of light and shadow, and dry leaves rustled under foot, and a fresh branchlet brushed my face. And, indeed, it was he who, evenly and softly striding at my side, cautiously held my arm, and, indeed, it was the same Kátya who was walking in a row with us, with creaking step. And, no doubt, it

was the moon in the sky that shone down upon us through the motionless branches —

But with every step the magic wall again closed up behind us and in front of us, and I ceased believing that it was possible to go farther; I ceased believing in all that was.

"Oh, a frog!" said Kátya.

"Who says that, and why?" I thought. Then I recalled that it was Kátya and that she was afraid of frogs, and I looked down at my feet. The tiny frog jumped and stood as though petrified before me, its small shadow appearing on the bright clay of the path.

"Are you not afraid?" he asked.

I looked around at him. There was one linden wanting in the spot which we were passing, and I could clearly see his face. It was so beautiful and happy —

He said, "Are you not afraid?" but I heard him say, "I love you, dear girl! — I love you! — I love you!" repeated his glance, his hand; and the light, the shadow, the air, everything repeated the same.

We made a circle around the whole garden. Kátya was walking, with her mincing steps, at our side, and breathing heavily from fatigue. She said that it was time to turn back, and I was sorry for her, poor woman. "Why does she not feel the same that we are feeling?" I thought. "Why are not all young and happy as this night and he and I?"

We returned home, but he did not leave for a long time, although the cocks had crowed, and all in the house were asleep, and his horse ever more frequently struck its hoofs against the burdocks and snorted beneath the window. Kátya did not remind us of the time, and we, talking of the most trifling things, sat up, without knowing it, till three o'clock in the morning. The third cocks were crowing and dawn began to break when he left. He bade us good-bye as usual, without saying anything in

particular; but I knew that from that day on he was mine, and that I should not lose him.

The moment I was conscious of loving him, I told Kátya everything. She was glad and touched by what I told her; but the poor woman was able to fall asleep that night, while I walked for a long, long time up and down the terrace, went down into the garden, and, recalling every word and every motion, strolled through all the avenues in which we had walked together. I did not sleep all that night, and for the first time in my life saw the rising sun and the break of day. I have never since seen such a night and such a morning.

"Why does he not tell me outright that he loves me?" I thought. "Why does he invent such difficulties and call himself an old man, when everything is so simple and beautiful? Why does he lose the golden time, which, maybe, will never return? Let him say, 'I love you!' let him say it in so many words! Let him take my hand, bend his head over it, and say, 'I love you!' Let him blush and lower his eyes before me, and then I will tell him everything. No, I will not tell him, I will embrace him, press closely to him, and weep. But how if I am mistaken, and he does not love me?" it suddenly flashed through my mind.

I was frightened at my sentiment, fearing that it might lead him and me God knows where, and I thought of my embarrassment in the shed, as I jumped down to him, and a heavy, heavy feeling oppressed my heart. Tears gushed from my eyes, and I began to pray. A strange thought and hope came to me, and it calmed me. I decided to fast from that day on, to take the sacrament upon my birthday, and on that very day to become his fiancée.

Wherefore? Why? How was it to happen? I did not know at all, but I believed and knew from that minute on that it would be so. It was quite light, and people were beginning to get up, when I returned to my room.

IV.

It was the fast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and so no one in the house was surprised at my determination to fast.

All that week he did not come once to see us, and I was not only not surprised, agitated, or angry with him, but, on the contrary, was glad that he did not come, and expected him only on my birthday. During that week I rose early in the morning, and, while they hitched up for me, walked all alone in the garden, passing over in my mind all my sins of the previous day and considering what I had to do in order to be satisfied with my day and not to sin even once. Then it seemed to me so easy to be entirely sinless. It seemed to me that all one had to do was to try a little.

The horses drove up; I and Kátya, or a maid, seated ourselves in the vehicle, and we drove to the church, which was three versts off. Every time I entered the church I bore in mind that people prayed for all "entering in the fear of God," and it was with this sentiment that I endeavoured to ascend the two grass-grown steps of the church entrance.

At that time there used to be no more than ten fasting peasant women and manorial servants. I tried to respond to their bows with considerate humility, and myself went to the candle box, which act I regarded as heroic, to get the candles from an old soldierly elder, and to put them up. Through the royal gate could be seen

the covering of the altar, which mamma had embroidered; over the iconostasis stood two angels with stars, which, when I was young, had appeared so large to me, and a dove with a yellow halo, which at that time used to interest me very much. Back of the choir could be seen an indented basin, in which I had so often baptized the children of our manorial servants, and in which I myself had been baptized.

The old priest came out in the vestment made from the shroud of my father's coffin, and held the divine service in the same voice in which, as far back as I remembered, had been held the divine service in our house, — Sónya's baptism, the mass after father, and the funeral service of my mother. The same tremulous voice of the sexton was heard in the choir, and the same old woman, whom I remembered having always seen in the church at every service, stood bending at the wall, looking with tearful eyes at the image in the choir, pressing her folded fingers to her faded kerchief, and mumbling something with her toothless mouth.

All this was not merely a matter of curiosity to me and not merely near to me on account of the recollections which it evoked, — all this was great and holy in my eyes, and seemed to me full of deep meaning. I listened to every word of the prayer read, tried to respond to it with my feeling, and if I did not understand it, I mentally asked God to enlighten me, or substituted a prayer of my own in place of the one I did not hear distinctly.

When prayers of repentance were read, I recalled my past, and that childish, innocent past seemed to me so black in comparison with the bright condition of my soul, that I wept and was terrified at myself; at the same time I felt that all that would be forgiven me, and that if there had been even more sins, repentance would have been so much sweeter for me.

When the priest, at the end of the service, said,

"God's blessing be with you!" it seemed to me that I experienced a physical sensation of bliss momentarily communicated to me, as though a certain light and warmth entered my heart. The service was over; the father came out to ask me whether I did not need him, and when he was to come to our house to serve the evening mass; I thanked him, being touched by what I thought he wished to do for me, and told him that I should walk or drive down myself.

"You wish to take the trouble yourself?" he would say to me.

I did not know what to reply, for fear of sinning in respect to pride.

After the mass I always dismissed the carriage, if I was without Kátya, and returned home on foot, bowing low and in humility to all the passers-by and trying to find an opportunity for giving advice and sacrificing myself for some one, helping to lift up a wagon, rocking a baby, going out of the way, and stepping into the mud.

One evening I heard the clerk, who was reporting to Kátya, say that the peasant Semén had come to ask for some boards for his daughter's coffin and a rouble for the mass, and that he had given him both.

"Are they so poor?" I asked.

"They are, madam! They have no salt," replied the clerk.

Something gave me a pang in my heart, and I was at the same time glad to hear it. I deceived Kátya by telling her that I wanted to take a walk, but ran up-stairs, took my money (there was very little of it, but it was all I had), and, crossing myself, went myself down the terrace and through the garden to the village, to Semén's hut. It was at the edge of the village, and I, unseen by any one, went up to the window, put the money on the sill, and tapped at the window-pane. Somebody came out of the hut, making the door creak, and called out to

me. I, trembling and chilled with fright, like a criminal, ran home.

Kátya asked me where I had been and what the matter was with me, but I did not understand what she was saying to me, and did not answer her. Everything suddenly seemed to me so insignificant and petty. I locked myself up in my room, and for a long time walked in it up and down, all alone, unable to do or think anything, unable to give myself an account of my feeling. I thought of the joy of the whole family, of the words they would use in reference to the one that had placed the money there, and I was sorry I had not handed them the money in person. I also thought of what Sergyéy Mikháylych would say if he found out my act, and I rejoiced because nobody would ever know it. There was such joy in me, and all, myself included, appeared so bad to me, and I looked so meekly at myself and at others, that the thought of death came to me as a dream of happiness. I smiled, and prayed, and wept, and at that moment I loved everybody in the world and myself so passionately and so ardently!

In the intervals of the services I read the Gospel, and this book became ever more intelligible to me, and the story of that divine life grew ever more touching and simple, and the depths of feeling and thought, which I found in its teaching, grew ever more awful and impenetrable. But, then, how clear and simple everything seemed to me, when I, rising from that book, again scrutinized and analyzed the life which surrounded me!

It seemed to me that it was so hard to live badly, and so simple to love all and be loved. All were so good and gentle with me, and even Sónya, whom I continued to instruct, was quite different: she tried to understand and please me, and to give me no cause for grief. As I was, so all were with me.

While passing in review all my enemies, whose for-

giveness I should have to ask before going to confession, I recalled only one young lady, a neighbour of mine, of whom I had made fun in the presence of guests the year before, and who had stopped calling on us. I wrote her a letter, acknowledging my guilt and asking her pardon. She answered me by a letter, in which she herself asked forgiveness, and forgave me. I wept with joy, reading these simple lines, in which I then saw just such a deep and touching sentiment.

My nurse burst out into tears when I asked her forgiveness. "Why are they all so good to me? Through what have I deserved such love?" I asked myself. I involuntarily thought of Sergyéy Mikháylych and could not get him out of my mind. I could not do otherwise, and even did not consider it a sin. I now thought of him quite differently from that night, when I for the first time discovered that I loved him; I thought of him as of myself, involuntarily connecting him with every thought of my future.

The crushing influence which I experienced in his presence now entirely disappeared from my imagination. I now felt myself as his equal, and I understood him from the height of the spiritual mood in which I was. That which before had seemed strange to me, now became intelligible. I now understood why he said that happiness consisted only in living for another, and I fully concurred with him. It seemed to me that together we should be so endlessly and calmly happy. I now dreamed, not of travels abroad, not of splendour, but of an entirely different, quiet, domestic life in the country, with eternal self-sacrifice, with eternal love for each other, and with the eternal consciousness of a gentle and helpful Providence in everything.

I went to communion, as I had expected, on my birthday. In my breast there was such a full happiness, when I on that day returned from church, that I was afraid of

life, of every impression, of everything which might have impaired that happiness. But the moment we stepped from our vehicle on the porch we heard on the bridge the rumble of the familiar cabriolet, and I saw Sergyéy Mikháylych. He congratulated me, and we went together to the drawing-room. Never since I had known him had I been so calm and collected with him as upon that morning. I felt that within me there was a whole new world, which he did not understand, and which was above him. I did not experience the least embarrassment in his presence. He, no doubt, knew what the cause of it was, and was especially gentle and piously respectful to me. I went up to the piano, but he locked it and put the key in his pocket.

"Do not disturb your disposition," he said. "There is now in your soul a better music than any other in the world."

I was thankful to him for it, but at the same time it annoyed me a little to see him understand so easily and correctly that in my soul which was to remain a secret from everybody. At dinner he said that he had come to congratulate me and, at the same time, to bid us farewell, as he was going away to Moscow. As he said this he looked at Kátya; later he cast a passing glance at me, and I saw that he was afraid to notice agitation in my face. But I was surprised, and not agitated, and did not even ask him how long he was going to stay. I knew that he would tell it himself, and I knew that he would not leave at all. How did I know it? I am now quite unable to account for it; but on that memorable day it seemed to me that I knew everything which was and which would be. I was as if in a happy dream, when everything that takes place seems to have happened before, and I had known it all the while, and it would all be again, and I knew that it would all be.

He wanted to leave soon after dinner, but Kátya, who

was tired from the mass, had gone to take a nap, and he had to wait until she should wake up, in order to bid her good-bye. The sun was shining into the parlour, and we went out on the terrace. The moment we sat down I began to say that which was to decide the fate of my love, and began to say it no earlier and no later than at the moment when we sat down and when nothing had yet been said, when there had not yet been struck a peculiar tone or character of conversation which might have interfered with that which I intended to say. I myself do not understand whence came to me that calmness, determination, and precision of expression. I felt as though something independent of my will were speaking within me. He sat opposite me, leaning on the balustrade and, drawing a lilac branch toward him, picked the leaves from it. When I began to speak he let the branch go and leaned his head on his arm. This might have been the expression of an entirely calm or of a very agitated man.

"Why are you leaving?" I asked, significantly, with pauses, and looking straight at him.

He did not answer at once.

"Business!" he muttered, lowering his head.

I saw how hard it was for him to tell an untruth in my presence and in response to my sincere question.

"Listen," I said, "you know what day this is for me. It is in many things a very important day. If I ask you I am not doing so in order to show my sympathy for you (you know that I am used to you and that I love you); I ask it of you because I must know it. Why are you leaving?"

"It is very hard for me to tell you the truth about my leaving," he said. "This week I have thought a great deal about you and about myself, and I have decided that I must leave. You know why, and, if you love me, you will not ask me." He rubbed his brow with his hand

and closed his eyes. "It is hard for me — but you can understand it."

My heart began to beat violently.

"I cannot understand," I said, "I cannot, but tell me, for God's sake, for the sake of this day tell me — I can listen calmly to you," I said.

He changed his position, glanced at me, and again drew the branch toward him.

"Well," he said, after a moment's silence, in a voice which tried to appear firm, "though it is stupid and impossible to tell it in words, although it is hard for me, I shall try to explain it to you," he added, frowning, as though from physical pain.

"Well?" said I.

"Let us suppose that there was a certain Mr. A——," he said, "an old gentleman, past his youth, and a certain Miss B——, a young, happy girl, who had seen neither people, nor life. Having stood in certain familiar relations with her, he came to love her as a daughter and had the courage to love her otherwise."

He stopped, but I did not interrupt him.

"But he forgot that B—— was so young, that life was still a plaything for her," he suddenly continued, in a rapid and determined voice, without looking at me, "and that it was easy enough to love her otherwise, and that that would please her. But he made a mistake, and he suddenly felt that another feeling, as heavy as repentance, was finding its way into his soul, and he was frightened. He was frightened at the thought that their former amicable relations would be disturbed, and he decided to leave before these relations should be disturbed." Saying this, he again, as if carelessly, began to rub his eyes with his hand, and he closed them.

"Why was he afraid to love her otherwise?" I said, hardly above a whisper, keeping back my agitation, and my voice was even, but to him it evidently appeared

frivolous. He answered me almost in an offended tone:

"You are young," he said, "and I am not young. You want to play, and I need something else. Play, but not with me, or else I will believe you, and then it will not be well for me, while you will be sorry. So A—— said," he added — "Well, that is all nonsense: you know why I am leaving. Let us not talk again of it, if you please!"

"Yes, yes! Let us talk!" I said, and tears quivered in my voice. "Did he love her or not?"

He made no reply.

"If he did not love her, why did he play with her, as with a child?" I muttered.

"Yes, yes, A—— was to be blamed," he replied, swiftly interrupting me, "but all was ended, and they parted — as friends."

"But that is terrible! And is there no other end to it?" I stammered, and was frightened at what I said.

"Yes, there is," he said, uncovering his agitated face and looking straight at me. "There are two different ends. But, for God's sake, do not interrupt me and listen calmly to what I have to say. Some say," he began, getting up and smiling a heavy, sickly smile, "some say that A—— went insane, senselessly fell in love with B—— and told her so — But she only laughed. For her this was a joke, but for him it was a whole life."

I shuddered and wanted to interrupt him, to tell him not to speak for me; but he kept me back, putting his hand on mine.

"Hold on," he said, in a trembling voice. "Others say that she took pity on him; she, poor girl, who had seen no people, imagined that she really could love him and consented to be his wife. He, insane man, believed that all his life would begin anew; but she herself saw that she had deceived him and that he had deceived her —

Let us not speak of it again!" he concluded, apparently unable to proceed, and silently walking up and down in front of me.

He said, "Let us not speak!" but I saw that he was with all the power of his soul waiting for an answer from me. I wanted to speak, but could not: something was compressing my heart. I looked at him: he was pale, and his lower lip was quivering. I felt pity for him. I made an effort, and, suddenly, breaking the power of silence which held me fettered, spoke to him in a soft, inward voice, which, I was afraid, would break at any moment.

"And the third end?" I said. I stopped, but he was silent. "And the third end is that he had not loved her, but had pained her, oh, so much, and that he thought that he was right in doing so and went away, priding himself on something. To you, and not to me, it may be a joke, but I have loved you from the first day," I repeated, and at the word "loved," my soft inward voice involuntarily passed into a desperate shriek, which frightened me.

He stood pale in front of me, his lip quivered ever more violently, and two tears stood on his cheeks.

"That is bad!" I almost shouted, feeling that bad, unwept tears were choking me. "Why are you doing it?" I said, rising, in order to go away from him.

But he did not let me go. His head lay on my knees; his lips kissed my trembling hands, and his tears wet them.

"My God, if I had known," he muttered.

"Why? Why?" I kept repeating, but in my soul there was happiness, for ever departing happiness, which was never to return.

Five minutes later Sónya ran up-stairs to Kátya and cried at the top of her voice that Másha wanted to marry Sergyéy Mikháylych.

V.

THERE was no reason for delaying our wedding, and neither I nor he wanted it delayed. It is true, Kátya wanted to go to Moscow to buy things, and order the trousseau, and his mother demanded that, before marrying, he should get him a new carriage and furniture, and should have the house newly papered; but both of us insisted that all that could be done later, if it was at all necessary, but that we should be married two weeks after my birthday, quietly, without a trousseau, without guests, without best men, suppers, champagne, and all the other conventional requisites of a wedding.

He told me that his mother was dissatisfied because the wedding was to be without music, without a mountain of trunks, and without a renovation of the whole house, unlike her wedding, which had cost thirty thousand, and that she, in all earnestness, and secretly from him, was rummaging through the trunks in the storeroom, and consulting with housekeeper Maryúshka about all kinds of rugs, curtains, and trays, which were absolutely necessary for our happiness.

On my side, Kátya was doing the same with nurse Kuzmínishna, and it would not do to speak jestingly to her about the matter. She was firmly convinced that we, speaking of our future, were only making love and talking nonsense, as is proper for people in such a condition, but that our material future happiness would depend on a correct cut and making of chemises and hemming of tablecloths and napkins.

Between Pokróvskoe and Nikólskoe secret messages

were carried all the time about what was being prepared in each place, and, although outwardly there seemed to be the tenderest of relations between Kátya and his mother, there began already to be felt a certain hostile, but very refined, diplomacy. Tatyána Seménovna, his mother, with whom I now became more closely acquainted, was an exacting, stern housekeeper, and a lady of the old style. He loved her not only as a dutiful son, but as a man of feeling, regarding her as the best, the cleverest, the kindest, and most loving of women in the world. Tatyána Seménovna had always been kind to us, and especially to me, and she was glad that her son was getting married; but when I called on her as a fiancée, it seemed to me that she wanted to make me feel that, as a match for her son, I could be better, and that it would not hurt me always to keep this in mind. I understood her very well and agreed with her.

During these last two weeks we saw each other every day. He arrived to dinner and remained until midnight. In spite of his assertion, — and I knew he was telling the truth, — that he could not live without me, he never passed a whole day with me and tried to attend to his business. Our external relations up to our wedding remained the same as before; we addressed each other as "you;" he did not even kiss my hand, and not only did not seek, but even avoided, occasions of being left alone with me, as though he were afraid to abandon himself to the too great and noxious tenderness which was in him. I do not know whether it was he or I who had changed, only I now felt myself to be his equal, no longer discovered in him that pretence of simplicity which had displeased me before, and frequently, with joy, saw before me, instead of a man inspiring respect and dread, a gentle boy abandoning himself to his happiness.

"So this is all there was in him!" I frequently thought. "He is just such a person as I am, and nothing more." It

now seemed to me that he was all of him before me, and that I knew him well. And all that which I found out about him was so simple, and harmonized so well with me. Even his plans of how we were to live were precisely my plans, except that they were more clearly and better defined in his words.

The weather during that time was bad, and we passed most of the time indoors. Our most intimate conversations took place in the corner between the piano and the window. From the black window-panes were reflected the short rays of the candle-light; now and then rain-drops beat against or flowed down the shining panes. Rain pattered on the roof; the water plashed in the puddle under the gutter; the air near the window felt damp. So much the brighter, warmer, and more cheerful was our corner.

"Do you know, I long ago wanted to tell you something," he once said, as we once sat late in that corner. "I thought about it all the time you were playing."

"Don't tell me anything, I know it all," I said.

"Yes, that is so, we won't speak of it."

"No, do tell me what it is!" I asked.

"It is this: Do you remember the story I told you about A—— and B——?"

"Of course I remember that stupid story. I am glad it ended as it did —"

"Yes, it would not have taken much for all my happiness to vanish through my own fault. You saved me. But the main thing is that I was not telling the truth then, and I now want to say what I left unsaid."

"Please don't!"

"Don't be afraid," he said, smiling. "I only want to justify myself. When I began to speak I wanted to reason."

"What is the good of reasoning?" I said. "One must not do that!"

"Yes, I reasoned badly. After all my disenchantments and blunders in life, as I arrived in the country, I said determinately that love was ended for me, that all there was left for me was the duty of living out my days. For a long time I had not asked myself what my feeling to you was, or to what it might lead me. I both hoped and did not hope; now I thought that you were flirting, now I believed you, and did not know myself what I should do. But after that evening, — you remember when we strolled through the garden, — I became frightened: my present happiness appeared too great and impossible to me. What would happen if I allowed myself to hope in vain? Of course, I was thinking only of myself, because I am a horrible egotist."

He grew silent, looking at me.

"It was by no means all nonsense which I was then saying. I had good reason for being afraid. I take so much from you and can give you so little. You are still a child; you are a bud that will unfold itself; you love for the first time, and I — "

"Tell me in all truth," I said, but suddenly I dreaded his answer; "no, don't," I added.

"Whether I have loved before? Yes?" he said, at once guessing my thought. "I can tell you that. No, I have not. Never was there anything resembling that feeling — " Suddenly a heavy recollection seemed to flash through his imagination. "No, and here I need your heart in order to have the right to love you," he said, sadly. "So did I not have cause for reflecting before telling you that I loved you? What do I offer you? Love, it is true."

"Is not that a great deal?" I said, looking into his eyes.

"It is little, my dear, little for you," he continued. "You have beauty and youth! Often now I do not sleep at night from happiness, and I think all the time of how we are going to live together. I had lived long, and it

seemed to me that I had found what was necessary for happiness. A quiet, solitary life in our wilderness, with a chance of doing good to people, to whom it is so easy to do any good to which they are not yet accustomed; then work, work, which seems to be profitable; then rest, Nature, a book, music, love of my neighbour, — that was my happiness, beyond which I did not dream. And here I have, above it all, such a friend as you, and there may be a family, and everything which a man may wish."

"Yes," I said.

"For me, who have lived past my youth, yes, but not for you," he continued. "You have not yet lived; you may wish to find happiness in something else, and, maybe, will find your happiness there. It seems to you that this is happiness because you love me."

"No, I always wished for and loved this quiet domestic life," I said. "You express precisely what I have been thinking."

He smiled.

"It only seems so to you, my friend. But this is not enough for you. You have beauty and youth," he repeated, thoughtfully.

I grew angry at his not believing me, and, as it were, reproaching me for my beauty and youth.

"For what, then, do you love me?" I said, angrily, "for my youth or for my own sake?"

"I do not know, but I love you," he replied, looking at me with his attentive, magnetic glance.

I did not answer, and involuntarily looked into his eyes. Suddenly something strange happened to me; at first I ceased seeing my surroundings: only his eyes seemed to sparkle in front of mine; then it seemed to me that these eyes were in me, — everything became mixed, and I saw nothing, and had to close my eyes in order to tear myself away from the feeling of enjoyment and terror which this glance produced in me.

On the eve of the day appointed for our wedding the weather cleared off. After the rains, which had begun in the summer, there was the first cold and bright fall day. Everything was damp, cold, and bright, and in the garden could be noticed for the first time the spaciousness, variegation, and bareness of autumn. The sky looked clear, cold, and pale.

I went to bed, happy in the thought that there would be good weather on the day of our wedding. On that day I awoke with the sun, and the thought that now was the day seemed to frighten and surprise me. I went into the garden. The sun had just risen, and shone checkered through the sear, yellowing leaves of the lindens. The road was strewn with rustling leaves. The wrinkled, bright bunches of the rowan-trees shone red on the branches among the frost-killed, scanty, curled-up leaves; the dahlias were wrinkled and black. The frost for the first time lay like silver on the pale green of the grass and on the broken burdocks near the house. On the clear, cold sky there was not, and could not be, a single cloud.

"Is it possible it is to-day?" I asked myself, not being able to believe my happiness. "Is it possible to-morrow I shall awaken, not here, but in the strange Nikólskoe house with the columns? Shall I not be waiting and meeting him, and in the evenings and nights speaking with Kátya about him? Shall I not be sitting with him at the piano in the Pokróvskoe house?" I recalled that he had said the day before that he was coming for the last time, and Kátya made me try on my wedding-gown, and said, "For to-morrow;" and I believed for a moment, and again doubted.

"Is it possible that from to-day I shall be living there with my mother-in-law, without Nadézha, without old man Grigóri, without Kátya? Shall I not kiss my nurse before going to bed, and shall I not see her, according to

her old habit, make the sign of the cross over me, and say, 'Good night, miss.' Shall I not be teaching Sónya and playing with her, and in the morning tapping the wall to her room and hearing her melodious laughter? Is it possible that I shall from this day on become a stranger to myself, and that a new life of the realization of my hopes and desires will be opened up before me? Will it be for ever, that new life?"

I waited for him with impatience; I felt so oppressed alone with my thoughts. He came early, and only in his presence did I fully believe that that day I was to become his wife, and that thought was no longer terrible to me.

Before dinner we went to our church to celebrate mass for my father.

"If he were alive now!" I thought, as we were returning home, and I silently leaned on the arm of the man who had been the best friend of him of whom I was thinking. During the prayer, as I touched the cold stone of the chapel floor with my head, I so vividly thought of my father and so firmly believed that his spirit understood me and approved my choice, that it seemed to me that even now his spirit was hovering above us and that I felt his blessing upon me. My recollections, and hopes, and happiness, and sorrow mingled within me in one solemn and agreeable sensation, with which harmonized that immovable fresh air, that calm, that bareness of the fields, and the pale sky, from which fell upon everything the bright but powerless beams which endeavoured to burn my cheek. It seemed to me that he with whom I was going understood and shared my feeling. He walked softly and in silence, and upon his face, at which I glanced now and then, there was expressed that partly sad, partly joyful solemnity which was in Nature and in my heart.

Suddenly he turned around to me, and I saw that he

wanted to say something. "Suppose he should speak of something different from what I am thinking about?" it occurred to me. But he spoke of my father, without mentioning him.

"He once said jokingly to me: 'Marry my Másha!'" he said.

"How happy he would be now," I said, pressing closer the arm that was supporting me.

"Yes, you were then a child," he continued, looking me in the eye. "I used then to kiss these eyes, and I loved them because they were like his, and I never thought that they ever would be dear to me for their own sake. I knew you then as Másha."

"Speak 'thou' to me," I said.

"I just wanted to say 'thou' to you," he said, "for now only you seem to be all mine," and a calm, happy, magnetic glance dwelt on me.

We were walking over an untrodden path, leading through a trampled stubble field. All we heard was our steps and our voices. On one side, beyond the ravine, as far as to the distant leafless grove, there ran a brownish stubble field, through which a peasant with his plough was laying out an ever-growing black strip. A herd of horses scattered at the foot of the hill looked as though they were near. On the other side and ahead of us, as far as the house, which could be seen back of it, lay the black, soft field of spring grain, here and there green in strips. The feebly warming sun gleamed over everything. On everything lay long, fleecy gossamers; they flew in the air around us and lodged on the frost-dried stubbles, and settled on our eyes, hair, and dresses. When we spoke, our voices sounded and hovered motionless in the air above us, as though we alone were there amid this world and all alone under this azure vault, upon which, flaring up and quivering, played the feebly warming sun.

I, too, wanted to say "thou" to him, but I was embarrassed.

"Why dost thou walk so fast?" I said, hurriedly and almost in a whisper, with an involuntary blush.

He walked slower, and glanced even more caressingly, more merrily and happily at me.

When we returned home his mother was already there, and so were the guests, without whom it was impossible to get along, and I was not left alone with him until the time when we seated ourselves in the carriage after leaving the church, on our way to Nikólskoe.

The church was almost empty. I saw, with one eye only, his mother standing upright on a little rug near the choir, Kátya in a cap with lilac ribbons and with tears upon her cheeks, and two or three manorial servants, who were looking curiously at me. I did not look at him, but felt his presence at my side.

I listened to the words of the prayers and repeated them, but there was no response to them in my soul. I could not pray, and looked dully at the images, the candles, the embroidered cross on the back of the priest's vestment, the iconostasis, the church window, and did not understand a thing. I felt that something unusual was taking place in me.

When the priest with the cross turned around toward us and congratulated us, saying that he had baptized me and that God had granted him the favour of marrying me, and Kátya and his mother kissed us, and we could hear Grigóri's voice calling the carriage, I was surprised and frightened, because everything was ended, and nothing unusual, corresponding to the mystery administered to us, had taken place in my soul. We kissed each other, and that kiss seemed so strange and foreign to our feeling. "And so that is all," I thought.

We went out of the church. The rumble of the wheels sounded hollow under the vault; a breath of fresh air

fanned my face; he put on his hat, and, taking me under my arms, helped me into the carriage. Through the window I saw the moon with its frost-ring. He sat down at my side and closed the carriage door. Something pinched my heart, as though I were offended by the confidence with which he did it.

Kátya cried out for me to cover my head; the wheels rattled over the stones, then over the soft road, and we drove away. I pressed myself into a corner and looked through the window at the distant bright fields and at the road, which ran along in the chill splendour of the moon.

I did not look at him, but felt his presence at my side. "Is this all I receive from the minute from which I had expected so much?" I thought, and it appeared humiliating and offensive to me to be sitting so close to him. I turned around with the intention of saying something to him. But words did not come to me, as though my former feeling of tenderness had disappeared and given way to a sensation of affront and terror.

"I did not believe till this moment that it would be," he softly replied to my glance.

"Yes, but I feel for some reason terribly," I said.

"Do I cause this feeling, my dear?" he said, taking my hand and lowering his head upon it.

My hand lay lifeless in his, and my heart was pinched with cold.

"Yes," I whispered.

But suddenly my heart began to beat more violently; my hand trembled and pressed his; I began to feel warm; my eyes in the semi-darkness searched out his, and I suddenly felt that I was not afraid of him, that that terror was love,—a new and much more tender and much stronger love than before. I felt that I was all his, and that I was happy in his power over me.

PART THE SECOND

I.

DAYS, weeks, two months of a solitary country life passed unnoticed, as I then thought; and yet there was enough of feelings, agitations, and happiness in those two months to last for a lifetime. His dreams and mine about how we should arrange our country life were realized quite differently from what we had expected. But our life was not worse than our dreams.

There was not that stern labour, that attention to duties, that self-sacrifice and life for another, which I had imagined when I was a fiancée; there was, on the contrary, nothing but a selfish sentiment of love for each other, a desire to be loved, a groundless, constant merriment and oblivion of everything in the world. It is true, he sometimes went into his cabinet, or to town on some business, and looked after the farm; but I saw that it cost him great labour to tear himself away from me. He himself confessed later that everything in the world, where I was not, appeared to him so nonsensical that he could not understand how he could busy himself with it.

It was the same with me. I read, occupied myself with music, with mamma, and with a school; but all that I did only because it was connected with him and gained his approbation; the moment the thought of him did not enter into any affair, my hands hung down, and it seemed so queer to me that there could be anything in the world except him. It may be that this was a bad, selfish feeling;

but it gave me happiness and raised me high above the rest of the world. Nobody else existed for me in the world, and I considered him the most beautiful and impeccable of men in the world; for this reason I could not live for anything else but him, and I wished to be in his eyes such as he thought me to be. And, indeed, he regarded me as the first, the most beautiful woman in the world, endowed with all possible virtues; and I endeavoured really to be that woman in the eyes of the first and best man in the whole world.

Once he entered my room just as I was praying. I looked around at him and continued to pray. He sat down at the table in order not to disturb me and opened a book. But it seemed to me that he was looking at me, and I looked back at him. He smiled; I laughed, and could not pray.

"Have you prayed already?" I asked.

"Yes. Go ahead, and I will leave you."

"I hope you pray."

He wanted to go away, without replying; but I stopped him.

"My darling, do me the favour and say the prayers with me." He stood up near me and, awkwardly dropping his hands, with a serious face, hesitating, said the prayers. Now and then he turned around and looked for approval and succour in my face.

When he was through, I laughed and embraced him.

"You are doing it all! I feel as though I were just ten years old," he said, blushing and kissing my hands.

Our house was one of those old country dwellings in which, respecting and loving each other, several generations of the same family had lived. There was on everything the seal of good, honourable family reminiscences, which seemed to have become mine also the moment I entered the house.

The arrangement and order of the house was due to

Tatyána Seménovna's care and was the same as before. It cannot be said that all was elegant and beautiful; but there was a plenty of everything, beginning with the servants and ending with the furniture and the food; everything was neat, durable, precise, and impressed one with respect. In the drawing-room the furniture was placed symmetrically; portraits hung upon the wall, and the floor was covered with home-made rugs and carpet-strips. In the divan-room there was an old grand, chiffonières of two different styles, divans, and brass-covered and inlaid tables. In my cabinet, which had been furnished under Tatyána Seménovna's care, there stood the very best of furniture of all ages and shapes, and, among other things, an old pier-glass into which I at first could not look without feeling abashed, but which later became dear to me as an old friend.

Tatyána Seménovna was not heard, but everything in the house went like clockwork, although there were many superfluous people. All these people, who wore soft, heelless boots (Tatyána Seménovna regarded the creaking of soles and thud of heels as the most disagreeable thing in the world), seemed to be proud of their calling, trembled before their old mistress, looked upon my husband and me with patronizing kindness, and seemed to be doing their work with special pleasure. Regularly every Saturday the floors were washed and the rugs were beaten; on the first of every month mass was held at the house with water consecration; every name-day of Tatyána Seménovna and of her son (and of mine for the first time that autumn) there were celebrations, to which all the neighbourhood was invited. All that had been done in the same order as far back as Tatyána Seménovna could remember.

My husband did not interfere with the housekeeping, and attended only to the field labour and the peasants, and he worked hard. He got up even in winter very early, so that when I awoke he was gone. He generally

returned to tea, which we drank alone, and at this time he was, after the troubles and tribulations of the field work, nearly always in that especially happy frame of mind which we had called "wild transport." I often demanded that he should tell me what he had been doing in the morning, and he told me such nonsense that we nearly died with laughter; at times I demanded a serious account, and he kept back a smile and gave it to me. I looked at his eyes and at his moving lips, and could not understand anything; I was simply glad to see him and to hear his voice.

"Repeat what I told you," he would say; but I was quite unable to repeat it. It seemed so funny to me to have him talk not of himself or of me, but of something different. As though it made any difference to me what was going on there. Only much later did I begin to understand a little and to be interested in his cares.

Tatyána Seménovna did not go out before dinner; she drank her tea alone and sent messengers to us to bid us good morning. In our especial, insanely happy world the voice from that other, proper, orderly corner of hers sounded so strange that I frequently could not hold back, and only laughed in response to the chambermaid who, folding her hands, announced in measured words that "Tatyána Seménovna has commanded me to find out how you rested after yesterday's outing, and she has ordered me to inform you that her side pained her all night, and that a stupid dog kept barking all night in the village, keeping her awake. She also commanded me to ask you how you liked the bread this morning, and begged me to remark that Tarás did not bake this morning, but that it was Nikolásha's first trial, and that the baking was not bad, especially the cracknel rings, but he has browned the toast too much."

Up to dinner, we were not much together. I played or read alone; he wrote and then went away; at dinner, at

four o'clock, we met in the drawing-room; mamma sailed out from her room, and there appeared some gentlewomen and pilgrims, of whom two or three always lived in the house. Following an old custom, he regularly every day offered his arm to his mother; but she demanded that he should give me the other, and so we regularly every day squeezed through the doors.

Mamma presided at dinner, and the conversation was carried on with reserved propriety and a certain solemnity. The simple words which my husband and I exchanged agreeably broke the solemnity of these prandial meetings. Between mother and son there were frequently discussions and an exchange of banter. I was very fond of these discussions and of that banter, because in them was best expressed the tender and firm love which united them.

After dinner, mamma seated herself in the drawing-room in a large armchair and crushed some snuff, or cut the pages of newly received books, while we read aloud or went to the divan-room, to the piano. We read a great deal during that time, but music was our favourite and best enjoyment, every time striking new chords in our hearts and, as it were, revealing one to the other anew. When I played his favourite pieces, he sat down on a distant divan, where I could hardly see him, and, from a certain reserve of feeling, tried to conceal the impression which the music produced on him; often, when he did not expect it, I got up from the piano, walked over to him, and tried to discover in his countenance the traces of agitation, the unnatural sparkle and moisture in his eyes, which he tried in vain to conceal from me. Mamma often wanted to take a look at us in the divan-room, but, apparently, she was afraid she would embarrass us, and so she sometimes walked through the divan-room with a quasi-serious and indifferent face, as though not noticing us; but I knew that she had no cause for going to her room and coming so soon back again.

I served the evening tea in the large drawing-room, and

again all the home-folk congregated at the table. This solemn meeting at the august samovár, and the distribution of glasses and cups, for a long time embarrassed me. It seemed to me that I was not yet worthy of that honour, that I was too young and frivolous to turn the faucet of such a huge samovár, to place a glass on Nikíta's tray and say, "For Peter Ivánovich, for Márya Mínichna," to ask, "Is it sweet enough?" and to leave pieces of sugar for the nurse and worthy servants.

"Superb, superb," my husband would say. "Just like a grown person," and that embarrassed me only more.

After tea, mamma laid a solitaire, or listened to Márya Mínichna's divination; then she kissed and crossed us both, and we went to our chamber. More frequently, however, we sat up, the two of us, until past midnight, and that was the best and most agreeable time for us. He told me of his past; we made plans, sometimes philosophized, and tried to speak in as low a voice as possible, so that we should not be heard up-stairs, and that Tatyána Seménovna might not be informed of our staying up, for she demanded that we should go to bed early.

At times, when we were hungry, we softly went to the buffet-room, by Nikíta's favour got out a cold lunch, and ate it by the light of one candle in my room. We lived together like strangers in this large old house, in which over everything stood the stern spirit of antiquity and of Tatyána Seménovna. Not only she, but the people, the old maids, the furniture, the pictures, inspired me with respect, with a certain dread and a consciousness that he and I were not quite in place here, and that we had to live quite carefully and attentively here.

As I recall it now, I see that much — that restraining, invariable order and that mass of idle and curious people in our house — was uncomfortable and a nuisance; but at that time that very restraint only enhanced our love. Not only I, but even he did not show that there was any-

thing which displeased us. On the contrary, he seemed to hide himself from anything that was bad.

Mamma's lackey, Dmítri Sídorov, a great lover of the pipe, used to go regularly every day, when we were in the divan-room, to my husband's cabinet to take some tobacco out of his box; it was a sight to see Sergyéy Mikháylych walk over to me on tiptoes with an expression of merry dread and, threatening with the finger and winking to me, point to Dmítri Sídorov, who did not in the least suspect that he had been watched. When Dmítri Sídorov went away without noticing us, rejoicing that all had gone off favourably, as on all other occasions, my husband said that I was a joy, and kissed me. At times this calm, this readiness to forgive all, and this seeming indifference to everything did not please me; I did not notice that the same was the case with me, and regarded it as a weakness. "He is just like a child that does not dare show his will," I thought.

"Ah, my dear," he once said to me when I told him that his weakness surprised me, "can a man be dissatisfied with anything when he is as happy as I am? It is easier to yield than to bend others, of that I became convinced long ago, and there is no position such that one cannot be happy in it. And we are so happy. I cannot be angry; for me there is now no such a thing as bad; for me there is only that which is pitiful and amusing. Above everything else, *le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.* Would you believe it? When I hear a bell, or receive a letter, or simply wake up, I feel terribly. It is terrible to have to live and see things change: there can be nothing better than the present."

I believed him, but did not understand him. I was so happy: it seemed to me that everything had to be just so and not otherwise, and that it was so with everybody, but that there was somewhere another, not a greater, but another, happiness.

Thus two months passed; the winter came with its colds and snow-storms, and I, in spite of his being with me, began to feel lonely; I began to feel that life was repeating itself, and that there was neither in me nor in him anything new, and that, on the contrary, we were returning to something old. He began to busy himself with his own affairs more than before, and I again began to think that there was in his soul a certain special world, to which he did not wish to admit me.

His habitual calm irritated me. I loved him not less than before, and I was not less happy in his love than before; but my love stopped and no longer grew, and, outside of love, another restless feeling began to steal into my soul. It was not enough for me to love after I had experienced the happiness of loving him.

I wanted motion, and not the calm current of life. I wanted agitation, dangers, and self-sacrifices for my sentiment. There was a surplus of strength in me which did not find a place in our calm life. I was beset by outbursts of pining which I, as something bad, tried to conceal from him, and by outbursts of unbounded tenderness and merriment, which frightened him. He had noticed my condition even before I had noticed it, and he proposed to me to settle in the city; but I begged him not to go there and not to change our mode of life, not to disturb our happiness.

Indeed, I was happy, but I was tormented by the thought that this happiness cost me no labour, no sacrifice, while the power of labour and sacrifice vexed me. I loved him, and I saw that I was everything to him; but I wanted everybody to see our love; I wanted to be disturbed in my love, and yet persevere in my love for him.

My mind and even my feelings were occupied, but there was another feeling of youth and the necessity of motion which did not find any satisfaction in our quiet

life. Why did he tell me that we could go to the city the moment I wanted it? If he had not told me so, I might have come to understand that the feeling which vexed me was dangerous nonsense and my own fault, and that the sacrifice for which I was looking was before me, namely, in the suppression of that feeling. The thought that I could save myself from the tedium only by settling in the city involuntarily came to me; and yet I felt ashamed and sorry to tear him away from everything which he loved.

In the meanwhile time passed. The snow drifted ever more against the walls of the house, and we were all alone, and we were still the same to each other; but somewhere there, in the splendour and noise, masses of people were agitated, suffered, and rejoiced, not thinking of us and our secluded existence. The worst for me was that I felt that with every day the habits of life fettered our life in one definite form; that our feeling was getting less free, and that it submitted itself to the even, impassionate current of time. In the morning we were merry, at dinner respectful, in the evening tender.

"Good!" I said to myself. "It is good to do good and live honourably, as he says; but we shall have time for that; but there is something for which I have the strength just now." I did not need that, I needed struggle; I wanted feeling to guide my life, and not life to guide my feeling. I wanted to walk up to a precipice with him and say, "Another step, and I shall hurl myself down there; another motion, and I am for ever lost," and I wanted him, standing pale on the brink of the precipice, to take me up in his strong arms, to hold me over it, so as to make my heart beat in fright, and to carry me away whither he pleased.

This condition affected even my health, and my nerves became unstrung. One morning I felt worse than usual. He returned out of sorts from the office, which was rare

with him. I immediately noticed that, and asked him what the matter was; but he did not wish to tell me, saying that it was not worth while. I learned later that the chief of the rural police had called up our peasants, and, out of malice to my husband, whom he did not like, had asked unlawful things of them and threatened them. My husband had not yet sufficiently digested it to be able to turn it all to ridicule, and so he was irritated and did not want to speak to me. But I thought that he did not wish to tell me about it because he regarded me as a child who could not understand that which interested him. I turned away from him, grew silent, and invited to tea Márya Mínichna, who was visiting us.

After tea, which I got through with in a hurry, I took Márya Mínichna to the divan-room, and began to speak in a loud voice with her about some nonsense, which was not in the least interesting to me. He walked up and down the room, now and then casting a glance at us. These glances for some reason had the peculiar effect upon me of making me speak more and more, and even of making me laugh. Everything which I said and which Márya Mínichna said seemed ridiculous to me.

Without saying a word to me, he went away to his cabinet and locked the door after him. The moment I no longer heard him, all my merriment suddenly disappeared, so that Márya Mínichna was surprised, and began to ask me what the matter was with me. I sat down on the divan, without answering her, and felt like weeping. "What is he brooding over?" I thought. "No doubt some nonsense which seems of importance to him; if he only told it to me, I would prove him that it was all bosh. No, he wants to think that I shall not understand him; he wants to humble me with his majestic calm, and be right in regard to me. And so I am right, too, when I feel lonely

and dull, when I want to live and move," I thought, "and not to stand in one place and feel time passing over me. I want to go forward, and with every day, with every hour, I want something new, while he wants to stop, and to stop me with him. How easy that would be for him! He does not need to take me to town for that; all that is necessary is that he should be such as I am, without contorting or repressing himself, and that he should live simply. He himself advises me to be simple, but he is not simple. That's it!"

I felt that tears rose in my heart, and that I was irritated against him. I was frightened at this irritation, and went to him. He was sitting in his cabinet and writing. When he heard my steps he for a moment looked around him with equanimity and calm, and continued to write. I did not like that glance; instead of walking over to him I stopped at the table at which he was writing, and, opening a book, began to look at it. He once more raised his eyes and looked at me.

"Másha, you are not in a good humour, are you?" he said.

I answered him with a cold glance, which said: "Don't ask! Please, none of your sweetness!" He shook his head, and smiled timidly and gently, but for the first time he received no smile in reply to his.

"What has been the matter with you to-day?" I asked. "Why did you not tell me?"

"It does not amount to much: just some little annoyance!" he replied. "Now I may tell it to you. Two peasants went to town —"

But I did not give him a chance of finishing.

"Why did you not tell me when I asked you about it at tea?"

"I might have told you something stupid, because I was so angry then."

"But I wanted to know it then."

"Why?"

"Why do you think that I am never able to help you in anything?"

"I think?" he said, throwing down the pen, "I think that I cannot live without you. You not only help me in everything, in everything, but you are doing everything. What an idea!" he laughed. "I live by you alone. It seems to me that everything is good only because you are here, because I need you —"

"Yes, I know that; I am a dear child who must be assuaged," I said, in such a tone that he looked at me in surprise, as though he had noticed that for the first time. "I do not want quietude. There is enough of it in you, more than enough," I added.

"So, you see, the matter is like this," he began hurriedly, interrupting me, apparently afraid to let me say all. "How would you judge about it?"

"I do not want to now," I replied. I really was anxious to hear what he had to say, but it gave me pleasure to disturb his quietude. "I do not want to play life, I want to live," I said, "just as you are living."

Upon his face, where everything was generally so quickly and so vividly reflected, there was expressed pain and intensified attention.

"I want to live on an equality with you, with you —"

I could not finish my words, for there was such sorrow, such deep sorrow, expressed on his face. He was silent for awhile.

"Where is the inequality between us?" he said. "Is it because I, and not you, bother with the chief of the rural police and with drunken peasants? —"

"Not in this alone," I said.

"For God's sake, my dear, understand me!" he continued. "I know that we are always pained by troubles: I have lived long enough to know it. I love you, and consequently I cannot help wishing to save you troubles

In this my life, my love for you, consists: therefore do not keep me from living my life!"

"You are always right!" I said, without looking at him.

I was provoked because everything in his soul was again clear and calm, while I was annoyed and experienced a feeling akin to repentance.

"Másha, what is the matter with you?" he said. "The question is not whether you are right or I, but something entirely different. What have you against me? Do not answer me at once, but think it over, and tell me all you think. You are dissatisfied with me, and you are, no doubt, right, but let me understand where my fault lies!"

How could I have revealed my soul to him? I was now even more agitated because he had understood me at once, because I was again as a child before him, and because I could not do a thing without his understanding and foreseeing it.

"I have nothing against you," I said. "I am simply lonely, and I do not want to be lonely. But you say that it ought to be so, and you are again right!"

I said this and glanced at him. My aim was reached: his quiet had disappeared; in his face there was an expression of fright and pain.

"Másha," he spoke, in a soft, agitated voice, "what we are doing now is no joke. Now our fate is being decided. I beg you not to answer me, but to listen to what I have to say. Why do you want to torment me?"

But I interrupted him:

"I know that you will be right. You had better not speak, because you are right," I said, coldly, as though not I, but an evil spirit within me, were speaking.

"If you only knew what you are doing!" he said, in a trembling voice.

I burst into tears, and I felt relief. He sat at my side and kept silent. I was both sorry for him and conscience-

stricken for what I had done. I did not look at him. It seemed to me that he was that moment looking at me with a severe, or with a perplexed, glance. I turned around: his soft, gentle glance, as though asking forgiveness of me, was directed upon me. I took his hand, and said:

"Forgive me! I do not know myself what I have been saying."

"Yes; but I know what you have been saying, and you have been telling me the truth."

"What is it?" I said.

"That we must go to St. Petersburg," he said. "We have nothing to do here now."

"As you wish," I said.

He embraced and kissed me.

"Forgive me!" he said. "I am guilty in respect to you."

On that evening I played for him for a long time, while he walked up and down in the room and kept whispering something, mostly verses, and, at times, some most terrible nonsense, by which I could tell the mood he was in.

"What are you whispering this evening?" I asked.

He stopped, thought for a moment, and, smiling, repeated two verses from Lérmontov:

> "'And he, insensate, asks for storms,
> As though in storms were rest for him!'"

"Yes, he is more than a man; he knows everything!" I thought. "How can I help loving him!"

I got up, took his hand, and began to walk with him, trying to keep step with him.

"Yes?" he asked, smiling, and looking at me.

"Yes," I said, in a whisper; and we were both seized by a fit of merriment: our eyes laughed, and we made

ever longer strides, and ever more walked on tiptoe. In the same gait we, to Grigóri's great displeasure and to the surprise of mamma, who was laying out a solitaire in the drawing-room, walked through all the rooms to the dining-room; here we stopped, looked at each other, and burst out laughing.

Two weeks later, before the holidays, we were in St. Petersburg.

II.

Our journey to St. Petersburg, a week in Moscow, his relatives and mine, getting things settled in our new quarters, the road, the new cities, the new faces, all that passed like a dream. All that was so varied, so new and jolly, all that was so warmly and so brightly illuminated by his presence and his love, that my quiet country life appeared to me like something long past and insignificant.

To my great surprise, instead of displaying social pride and coldness, such as I had expected to find in people, all (not only my relatives, but even strangers) met me with such heartfelt kindness and hospitality that it seemed to me as though they had been doing nothing but thinking of me, as though they had just been waiting for me in order themselves to be happy. Just as unexpected for me was the discovery that my husband had many acquaintances, of whom he had never spoken to me, in what to me seemed to be the very best of social circles; and often it affected me strangely and disagreeably to hear him pass severe judgment on some of those people, who appeared to me to be so good. I could not understand why he treated them so dryly, and why he tried to avoid many acquaintances which I thought to be flattering. I thought that the more people one knew the better, and that all of them were good people.

"We shall have to be careful in the city," he said, before our departure from the country. "Here we are small Crœsuses, but there we shall be in very moderate circumstances, and so we must not stay in the city longer than until Easter, nor make social calls, or else we shall

become entangled; and for your own sake I should not like to — "

"What is the use of society?" I replied. "We shall only get a glance at the theatres, at our relatives, shall listen to operas and good music, and before Easter we shall be back in the country."

But the moment we arrived in St. Petersburg all our plans were forgotten. I suddenly found myself in such a new and happy world, so many joys took possession of me, and such novel interests came up, that I immediately, even though unconsciously, refuted all my past and all the plans of that past.

"All that was only in joke, — it has not begun yet; but this is real life! What else would it be?" I thought. Disquietude and the beginning of loneliness, which had troubled me in the country, suddenly disappeared entirely, as though by magic. My love for my husband became calmer, and I was never assailed here by the thought that he might love me less. Indeed, I could not doubt his love: he grasped at once every thought of mine, shared every feeling, fulfilled every wish. His quiet disappeared, or, at least, no longer irritated me. Besides, I felt that in addition to his former love he here enjoyed the sight of me. Frequently, after a visit, or a new acquaintance, or an evening at our house, where I, inwardly trembling for fear of making mistakes, did my duties as a hostess, he would say: "You are a fine girl! First-rate! Keep up your courage! Just right!" and I was happy.

Soon after our arrival he wrote to his mother, and when he called me in to add a few words to her, he would not let me see what he had written; whereat I naturally insisted and read it. "You will not recognize Másha," he wrote, "and I myself do not recognize her. I wonder where she gets that sweet, graceful self-confidence, affability, and even worldly mind and charm. And all this is simple, dear, and good-natured. Everybody is delighted

with her, and I myself don't get tired watching her, and, if such a thing were possible, would love her even more."

"Oh, so that is what I am?" I thought. And I felt so merry and happy, and I thought that I loved him more than ever. My success with all our acquaintances was quite unexpected to me. I was told on all sides that I had especially pleased grandfather, or that aunty was in ecstasy over me; or one man would tell me that there were no women like me in St. Petersburg; or a woman would assure me that I had only to wish it, and I should be the most *recherchée* woman in society. Especially my husband's cousin, Princess D——, a middle-aged society lady, who suddenly took a great liking to me, more than anybody else, told me all kinds of flattering things which turned my head. When the cousin for the first time invited me to go to a ball with her, and asked my husband to let me go, he turned to me and, with a barely perceptible, sly smile, asked me whether I wanted to go. I nodded in sign of assent, and I felt that I was blushing.

"You act like a criminal that confesses what it is he wants," he said, smiling good-naturedly.

"But you told me that we must not go into society, and that you did not like it anyway," I answered, smiling, and looking at him with an entreating glance.

"If you are very anxious to go, we will go," he said.

"Really, we had better not."

"Do you want to? Very much so?" he again asked me.

I made no reply.

"Society is not the greatest calamity," he continued, "but unsatisfied social desires are both bad and abominable. We must go there by all means, and we will," he concluded, with determination.

"To tell you the truth," I said, "there was nothing in the world I wanted so much as this ball."

We went, and the pleasure which I experienced surpassed all my expectations. At the ball it appeared to me that I was, even more than before, the centre around which everything revolved, that it was only for me that this large hall was illuminated and the music played, and that this mass of people was congregated to admire me. All, beginning with the hair-dresser and chambermaid, and ending with the dancers and old gentlemen who paraded in the hall, seemed to be telling me and making me feel that they loved me. The universal opinion, which had formed itself at this ball and of which my cousin informed me, was to the effect that I in no way resembled other women, that there was in me something especial, country-like, simple, and charming. That success flattered me so much that I frankly told my husband that I should like to attend two or three more balls that year, "in order to be satiated by them," I added, com promising with truth.

My husband gave his ready consent, and at first went with me with apparent pleasure, delighted at my success, and, seemingly, forgetting or refuting that which he had said before.

Later on, the life which we were living began to annoy him and hang heavy on him. But my mind was elsewhere: even though I at times noticed his concentrated and serious glance I did not understand its meaning. I was so beclouded by that love, suddenly provoked, as I thought, in all the strangers, and by that atmosphere of elegance, pleasure, and novelty, which I now breathed for the first time; so suddenly had his crushing moral influence disappeared; it was so pleasant for me not only to be his equal, but even his superior, in this society, and for this very reason to love him more than before and more independently, that I was unable to understand what his objections were to this society life.

I experienced a novel feeling of pride and contentment

when, upon entering at a ball, all eyes were directed toward me, and he, as though abashed to acknowledge the possession of me before the crowd, hastened to leave me alone and to lose himself in the black mass of evening dresses. "Wait!" I frequently thought, searching out with my eyes his unnoticeable, and sometimes lonely, figure in the corner of the hall. "Wait!" I thought. "We will get home, and you will understand and see for whom it was I was trying to be beautiful and brilliant, and what it is I this evening love most in all that surrounds me!" I was honestly convinced that my success gave me pleasure only because I thus had a chance of sacrificing it for him.

There was one thing in society which, I thought, might become dangerous to me, and that was the possibility of an infatuation for one of the men whom I met, and my husband's jealousy; but he had such faith in me, and seemed to be so calm and composed, and all these young men seemed to me so insignificant in comparison with him, that in my opinion the only danger of society did not have any terrors for me. Still, the attentions I received from so many people in society afforded me pleasure, flattered my vanity, made me think that there was some merit in my love for my husband, and caused me to treat him with greater self-confidence and almost with greater carelessness.

"I saw you talk a little too excitedly with N——," I once, upon returning from a ball, said to him, threatening him with my finger, and giving the name of one of the well-known ladies of St. Petersburg, with whom he had actually talked on that evening. I said this in order to stir him up, for he was so taciturn and dull.

"Ah, why do you say that? Don't say that, Másha!" he spoke through his teeth and frowning, as though from physical pain. "It does not at all fit you or me! Leave that to others! These false relations may spoil our real

ones, and I still hope that our real relations will return."

I felt ashamed and kept silent.

"Will they return, Másha? What do you think?" he asked.

"They have never been spoiled and never will be," I said, feeling then that I was telling the truth.

"God grant it be so," he said. "It is about time we should return to the country."

He told me that only once; on other occasions I thought that he was as well off as I, and I felt happy and joyful. "Even though at times it may be rather dull for him," I consoled myself, "I have felt ennui for his sake in the country. Even though our relations may have changed a little, everything will come back again as soon as we are left during the summer all alone with Tatyána Seménovna in our Nikólskoe house."

Thus the winter passed imperceptibly for me, and we, contrary to our plans, stayed through Easter at St. Petersburg. During Quasimodo week we were getting ready to leave: everything was packed, and my husband, who had already purchased the presents, and all kinds of things and flowers for our country home, was in a very happy frame of mind. His cousin suddenly arrived and begged me to stay until Saturday so as to have a chance of going with her to a reception at the house of Countess R——. She said that Countess R—— was very anxious to have me come, that Prince M——, who was then at St. Petersburg, had wished ever since the last ball to meet me, and that he would come to the reception for this reason alone, and that he had said that I was the prettiest woman in Russia. The whole city was to be there, and, in short, it would be simply horrible if I did not go.

My husband was at the other end of the drawing-room, conversing with somebody.

"Well, are you going to come, Mary?" said his cousin.

"We intend leaving for the country day after to-morrow," I replied hesitatingly, looking at my husband. Our eyes met, and he quickly turned away.

"I will persuade him to stay," said his cousin, "and we will go there Saturday to turn people's heads. You will, won't you?"

"That would break up our plans, and we are all packed," I replied, beginning to succumb.

"She had better go this evening to pay her respects to the prince," my husband said at the other end of the drawing-room, in a repressed and irritated voice, such as I had never before heard in him.

"Ah, he is jealous! I see this for the first time," the cousin laughed. "I am not persuading her for the sake of the prince, Sergyéy Mikháylych, but for the sake of all of us. Countess R—— was so anxious to see her!"

"That depends on her," my husband said, coldly, going out.

I saw that he was agitated more than usual: that tormented me, and I gave the cousin no promise. The moment she left I went to my husband. He was walking up and down, lost in thought, and did not see or hear me, as I walked in on tiptoe.

"He is already thinking of the dear Nikólskoe house," I thought, looking at him, "and of the morning coffee in the bright drawing-room, and of his fields, peasants, and evenings in the divan-room, and of the mysterious suppers at night. No!" I decided, "all the balls in the world and the flattery of all the princes in the world will I give for his joyful embarrassment and calm love."

I wanted to tell him that I would not go to the reception, when he suddenly turned around and, seeing me, frowned and lost the gentle and thoughtful expression of his face. Again his glance betrayed perspicacity, wisdom, and a patronizing calm. He did not want me to see him

as a simple man; he had always to stand on a pedestal, as a demigod, before me.

"What is it, my dear?" he asked, turning to me in a careless and calm manner.

I made no reply. I was annoyed because he concealed himself from me and did not wish to remain such as I loved him.

"Do you want to go to the reception on Saturday?" he asked me.

"I wanted to," I replied, "but you do not like it; besides, everything is packed," I added.

He had never before glanced so coldly at me, or spoken so coldly with me.

"I will not leave before Tuesday, and will have the things unpacked," he said, "and so you can go, if you want to. Do me the favour and go! I will not leave before."

As always, when he was agitated, he began to pace through the room with an unsteady step, without looking at me.

"I positively cannot understand you," I said, standing in one spot and watching him with my eyes, "you say that you are always so calm." (He had never said it.) "Why do you speak so strangely to me? I am ready for your sake to sacrifice that pleasure, and you ask me so ironically, as you have never spoken to me before, that I should go."

"Well! You *sacrifice*" (he put special emphasis on the word), "and so do I. What more do you want? It is a contest of magnanimity. What other domestic happiness do you wish?"

This was the first time I heard such bitter and scornful words from him. His ridicule did not make me feel ashamed, but offended me, and his exasperation did not frighten me, but was communicated to me. Was it he, who had always been afraid of triteness in our relations, who had always been sincere and simple, that was saying

this now? And for what reason? Because, indeed, I wanted to sacrifice to him a pleasure, in which I saw nothing wrong, and because but a minute ago I had understood and loved him so well. Our rôles had changed: he avoided straight, simple words, and I sought them.

"You have changed very much," I said, with a sigh. "What wrong have I done to you? It is not the reception, but something else that you are harbouring in your heart against me. Why that insincerity? Were you not yourself formerly afraid of it? Speak out, what have you against me?" — "What will he say?" I thought, recalling with a feeling of self-satisfaction that he could not upbraid me for anything I might have done all winter.

I walked to the middle of the room, so that he was compelled to pass close to me, and kept looking at him. "He will come by and embrace me, and everything will be over," I thought, and I was even sorry that I should not have a chance of proving to him that he was in the wrong.

"You still do not understand me?" he said.

"No."

"Well, then I will tell you. I am disgusted, for the first time disgusted, with what I feel and cannot help feeling." He stopped, apparently frightened at the rude sound of his voice.

"What is it?" I asked, with tears of indignation in my eyes.

"I am disgusted because the prince has found you pretty, and because you for that reason run to meet him, forgetting your husband, and yourself, and your woman's dignity, and because you do not wish to comprehend what your husband must feel for you, if the sense of dignity is lacking in you. You come, on the contrary, to tell your husband that you are *sacrificing*, that is as much as to say: 'It is a great happiness for me to show myself to his Highness, but I shall *sacrifice* it.'"

The farther he spoke, the more the sounds of his own voice excited him, and that voice sounded venomous, cruel, and rude. I had never seen him, or expected to see him, such. The blood rushed to my heart; I was afraid, but, at the same time, the feeling of unmerited shame and offended self-love agitated me, and I wanted to avenge it.

"I have been expecting this for quite awhile," I said. "Talk, talk!"

"I do not know what it is you have been expecting," he continued, "but I could expect the very worst, seeing you every day in the mire, idleness, luxury of that stupid society, and I have lived — I have lived to feel to-day as pained and ashamed as never before, — pained because your friend with her dirty hands rummaged in my soul and began to speak of jealousy, of my jealousy, of whom? of a man whom neither you nor I know. And you seem to be determined not to understand me, and you want to sacrifice for me what? — I am ashamed for your sake, for your degradation! — Sacrifice! —" he repeated.

"Oh, so there is man's power!" I thought. "It is to offend and humiliate a woman who is not guilty of anything. So those are a man's rights! But I will never submit to them."

"No, I am not sacrificing anything for you," I muttered, feeling my nostrils expand in an unnatural way, and the blood leaving my face. "I will go to the reception on Saturday, I will, by all means."

"God give you as much pleasure as possible, only between us everything is ended!" he exclaimed, in a fit of unrestrained rage. "You will no longer torment me. I was a fool to —" he began once more, but his lips quivered, and it apparently cost him an effort to keep back that which he had intended to say.

I was afraid of him that moment, and I hated him. I

wanted to tell him much and to avenge all my insults; but, if I had opened my mouth, I should have wept, and thus should have lowered myself before him. I went silently out of the room; but the moment I no longer heard his steps I was horrified at what we had been doing. I felt terribly at the thought that this union, which constituted all my happiness, would really be severed for ever, and I wanted to go back. "But is he sufficiently calm now to understand me when I shall silently extend my hand to him and look into his eyes?" I thought. "Will he understand my magnanimity? Suppose he should call my grief hypocrisy? or should accept my repentance with the consciousness of right and with proud composure, and forgive me? Why, why has he, whom I love so much, offended me so cruelly?"

I went not to him, but to my room, where I sat alone for a long time and wept, in terror recalling every word of the conversation which had taken place between us, putting other words for these, adding new, good words, and again recalling, with terror and a feeling of insult, that which had happened. When I in the evening came out to tea, and met my husband in the presence of S——, who was at our house, I understood that from that day on a whole abyss lay between us. S—— asked me when we should leave. I had no time to answer him.

"On Tuesday," replied my husband. "We shall attend the reception at Countess R——'s. You are going there, aren't you?" he turned to me.

I was frightened at the sound of that simple voice, and timidly glanced at my husband. His eyes were looking straight at me; their glance was evil and scornful; his voice was even and cold.

"Yes," I replied.

In the evening, when we were left alone, he came up to me and gave me his hand.

"Forget what I have told you!" he said to me.

I took his hand. There was a quivering smile upon my countenance, and the tears were ready to flow; but he took his hand away and, as though afraid of a sentimental scene, sat down on a chair at quite a distance from me.

"Does he really persist in considering himself right?" I thought, and the explanation and request not to go to the reception, which I was about to make, stopped on my tongue.

"I must write to mother that we have put off our departure," he said, "or else she will worry."

"When do you expect to leave?" I asked.

"On Tuesday, after the reception," he replied.

"I hope you are not doing it for my sake," I said, looking into his eyes; but his eyes only looked, without telling me anything, as though they were veiled from me by something. His face suddenly appeared old and unpleasant to me.

We went to the reception, and there seemed to have been established good, friendly relations between us, but these relations were different from what they had been before.

I was sitting between some ladies at the reception, when the prince walked over to me, so that I had to get up in order to speak with him. As I arose I involuntarily sought my husband with my eyes, and I saw that he had been looking at me from the other end of the hall, and that he turned his face away. I suddenly felt so ashamed and pained that I had a twinge of embarrassment, and my face and neck flushed under the glance of the prince. But I was compelled to stand and listen to what he was telling me, looking down upon me.

Our conversation did not last long; he had no place near me to sit down, and he evidently felt that I was not at my ease with him. Our conversation was about the last ball, about where I passed the summer, and so forth.

As he went away from me he expressed his wish to become acquainted with my husband, and later I saw them together and talking at the other end of the hall. The prince evidently said something about me, because he in the middle of his conversation turned, with a smile, in our direction.

My husband suddenly flew up, made a low bow, and walked away from the prince. I myself blushed: I was ashamed thinking what an idea the prince must have received of me, and especially of my husband. It seemed to me that everybody had noticed my awkward bashfulness while I was speaking with the prince, and that they had noticed my husband's strange act; God knows how they might interpret it! and I was afraid they might know about my conversation with my husband.

The cousin took me home, and on my way we spoke about my husband. I could bear it no longer, and so told her everything that had taken place between us on account of that unfortunate reception. She calmed me down, saying that it was an entirely insignificant and very common misunderstanding, which would leave no traces behind; she explained to me from her standpoint my husband's character, and found that he had become very incommunicative and proud; I agreed with her, and I thought that I myself now judged him more calmly and understood him better.

But later, when my husband and I were left alone, that judgment about him lay like a crime upon my conscience, and I felt that the abyss that separated us had widened.

III.

FROM that day on our life and our relations changed. We no longer felt so happy, when left alone, as we had been. There were questions which we avoided, and it was easier for us to converse in presence of a third person than when left face to face. The moment the conversation turned on the life in the country or on the ball, imps seemed to be jumping about in our eyes, and we felt ill at ease if we had to look at each other, as though we felt in what place the abyss was, which separated us, and as though we were afraid to approach it.

I was convinced that he was proud and excitable, and I had to be cautious in order not to touch him on his weak points. He was convinced that I could not live without society, that the country was not for me, and that it was necessary to submit to that unfortunate taste. Both of us avoided direct allusions to these subjects, and falsely judged each other. We had long ago ceased being the most perfect people in the world to each other, but compared ourselves with others, and secretly judged one another.

I fell ill before our departure, and we went to a summer residence, instead of returning to the country; from there my husband went himself to see his mother. When he left I was well enough to go with him, but he persuaded me to stay, claiming that he was afraid for my health. I was sure that he had no fears in regard to my health, but that he was afraid we should not be happy

in the country; I did not insist very much, and so I remained.

Without him there was a void, and I felt lonely, but when he returned I saw that he no longer added to my life what he had brought to it before. Our former relations, when every thought and feeling which was not communicated to him weighed upon me as a crime, when every act and word of his appeared to me to be a sample of perfection, when we wanted to laugh from sheer joy, as we looked at each other, — these relations had so imperceptibly passed into other relations that we did not notice how they had disappeared.

With each of us there rose separate interests and cares, which we no longer tried to share in common. We were, indeed, no longer vexed by the fact that each of us had a separate world which was foreign to the other. We became accustomed to this thought, and a year later the little imps no longer bobbed in our eyes when we looked at each other.

His fits of merriment with me, his childishness, entirely disappeared; there disappeared also his readiness to forgive and his indifference to everything, which used to provoke me so much before; there was no longer that deep glance which used to confuse and delight me; there were no longer any prayers and transports in common; we even did not see each other much, for he was most of the time away, and he was not afraid or sorry to leave me alone; I was all the time in society where I did not need him.

There were no more scenes and misunderstandings between us: I tried to please him; he fulfilled all my wishes, and we seemingly loved each other.

When we were left alone, which happened but seldom, I experienced no joy, no agitation, no embarrassment with him; it was as though I were alone. I knew very well that it was my husband, not a new, unknown man,

but a good man, — my husband, whom I knew as I knew myself. I was convinced that I knew precisely what he would do, or say, or how he would look, and if he happened to do or look differently from what I expected, it always seemed to me that he must be mistaken. I expected nothing of him. In short, he was my husband and nothing else.

It seemed to me that that was the way it ought to be, that there were no other relations, and that no other relations had ever existed between us. When he went away on some journey, I was at first lonely and felt terribly: without him I saw more clearly what his support meant for me; when he came back, I fell upon his neck with joy, though two hours later I entirely forgot that joy, and I had nothing to talk about with him. Only in moments of calm, moderate tenderness, which were between us, I thought that something was not quite right, that I had some pain in my heart, and I thought I read the same in his eyes. I was conscious of that limit of tenderness, beyond which he seemed to be unwilling, and I was unable, to go. At times that made me sad, but there was no time to reflect upon anything, and I tried to forget the sorrow resulting from the indistinctly perceived change in the distractions which were always ready for me.

The society life, which at first had overwhelmed me by its splendour and by the flattery of my vanity, soon took complete possession of my inclinations, became a second nature, put its fetters upon me, and took up in my soul the place which had been prepared for sentiment. I no longer was myself, and was afraid to dwell on my condition. All my time, from late morning to late night, was taken up and did not belong to me, even if I did not drive out. This no longer gave me pleasure or ennui, but it seemed to me that thus, and not otherwise, it had always to be.

Thus three years passed, during which our relations

remained the same, as though they had stopped and congealed, and could become neither worse nor better. During these three years two important events took place in our domestic life, but neither of them changed our relations: those were the birth of my first child and the death of Tatyána Seménovna.

At first the maternal feeling seized me so powerfully and produced such unexpected transports in me that I thought that a new life would begin for me; but two months later, when I again began to go out in society, this sentiment kept diminishing and passed into habit and a cold performance of duty. My husband, on the contrary, after the birth of our first baby, became the same gentle and calm home-body he had been, and transferred his former tenderness and merriment to his child. Frequently, when I entered the nursery in my ball dress, in order to cross the child for the night, I found my husband there, and I noticed what I took to be his reproachful and stern glance directed at me, and I felt ashamed. I suddenly was horrified at my indifference for the child, and asked myself whether I really was worse than other women. "But what is to be done?" I thought. "I love my son, but I can't sit whole days with him: I feel ennui, and I sha'n't pretend for anything in the world."

His mother's death was a great bereavement to him. He found it hard, he said, to live in Nikólskoe after her; although I was sorry for her and sympathized with my husband in his loss, I now felt more at ease and happier in the country. All those three years we passed mainly in the city; to the country I went only once for two months; in the third year we went abroad.

We passed a summer at a watering-place.

I was then twenty-one years old. Our affairs, I thought, were in a flourishing condition; from my domestic life I demanded nothing more than what it gave me; all

whom I knew seemed to love me; my health was good, and my toilet was the best at the watering-place; I knew that I was pretty; the weather was beautiful; an atmosphere of beauty and elegance surrounded me, and I was very merry. I was not as merry as I used to be at Nikólskoe, when I felt that I was happy in myself; that I was happy because I had deserved that happiness; that my happiness was great, but ought to be greater still; that I wanted more and more happiness. Then it had been different, but even that summer I was happy.

I wanted nothing; I hoped for nothing, was afraid of nothing, and my life seemed to be full, and my conscience seemed to be calm. From among all the young men of that season there was not one whom I in any way distinguished from the rest, or even from old Prince K——, our ambassador, who paid court to me. One of them was young, another old, one a blond Englishman, another a Frenchman with a little beard, — they were all the same to me, but they were all necessary to me. They were all equally indifferent persons who formed the cheerful atmosphere of life which surrounded me.

Only one of them, D——, an Italian marquis, more than the rest attracted my attention by the boldness with which he expressed his admiration for me. He never missed an opportunity of being with me, of dancing, driving out, being in the Casino, and so forth, and of telling me that I was beautiful. I saw him several times through the window near our house, and frequently the disagreeable, fixed glance of his sparkling eyes made me blush and turn around. He was young, handsome, elegant, and, above everything else, by his smile and the expression of his brow resembled my husband, though he was handsomer still. This resemblance startled me, though in general, in his lips, in his glance, in the long chin, there was in him, instead of the charm of an expression of kindness and the ideal composure of my husband, something

coarse and animal. I then imagined that he was passionately in love with me, and I frequently thought of him with proud compassion. I at times tried to assuage him, to lead him up to a tone of semi-confidential, calm friendship, but he brusquely repelled all these attempts and continued disagreeably to embarrass me with his unexpressed passion, which was ready to burst forth at any time. Although I was not conscious of it, I was afraid of that man, and against my will frequently thought of him. My husband was acquainted with him, and he held himself colder and haughtier with him than with our other acquaintances, for whom he was only the husband of his wife.

At the end of the watering season I became ill, and for two weeks did not leave my room. When I for the first time after my illness went out in the evening to hear the music, I heard that while I was absent there had arrived the long expected Lady S——, famous for her beauty. There was a circle around me, and I was cheerfully received; but a better circle was formed around the newly arrived lioness. Everybody about me spoke only of her and her beauty. She was pointed out to me, and she was indeed charming; but I was disagreeably affected by the self-contentment expressed in her face, and so I mentioned it. On that day, everything, which before had been merry, appeared dull. On the following day Lady S—— arranged an outing to the castle, which I declined. Hardly anybody remained with me, and everything definitely changed in my eyes.

Everything and everybody seemed stupid and dull to me, and I felt like weeping, like getting through with the cure at once, and returning to Russia. There was some evil feeling in my soul, but I was not yet conscious of it. I announced myself in ill health and stopped appearing in grand society; only in the morning did I go out to drink the waters, or I drove with L—— M——, a Rus-

sian lady acquaintance, to look at the surrounding country. My husband was not there during that time: he had gone for a few days to Heidelberg, waiting for the end of the cure and for our return to Russia; he seldom came to see me.

One day Lady S—— drew all society with her on a chase while L—— M—— and I after dinner drove to the castle. As our carriage was going at a slow pace over a winding avenue between century-old chestnut-trees, through which the beautiful and elegant Baden surroundings were revealed to us in the distance, as they lay illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, we fell into a serious conversation, such as we had never had before. L—— M——, whom I had known for quite a while, now for the first time presented herself to me as a good and clever woman, to whom it was possible to tell everything and with whom it was a pleasure to be friends. We spoke of family, of children, of the emptiness of society at the watering-place, and we wanted to go back to Russia, to the country, and felt both sad and good. We entered the castle under the influence of this serious feeling.

Within the walls it was shady and fresh; the sun was playing above on the ruins; somebody's steps and voices were heard. Through the door could be seen, as though in a frame, that charming, but for us Russians cold, Baden landscape. We sat down to rest ourselves, and silently looked at the setting sun. The voices were heard more distinctly, and I thought my name was mentioned. I began to listen and involuntarily heard every word.

The voices were familiar to me: it was Marquis D—— and a Frenchman, his friend, whom I knew also. They were speaking of me and of Lady S——. The Frenchman was comparing us two, analyzing her beauty and mine. He was not saying anything offensive, but the blood rushed to my heart when I heard his words. He gave a

detailed account of what there was beautiful in me and in Lady S——. I already had a baby, and Lady S—— was only nineteen years old; my braid was prettier, but the lady's waist was better; the lady was a great lady, while "yours," he said, "is neither here nor there, just one of those petty Russian princesses, of whom there has been of late such an abundance here." He concluded that I did well in that I did not try to contest with Lady S——, and that I was absolutely buried in Baden.

"I am sorry for her."

"But if she will not be consoled with you —" he added, in a merry and harsh voice.

"If she goes away I will follow her," rudely remarked the voice with the Italian accent.

"Happy mortal! He still can love!" laughed the Frenchman.

"Love!" said the voice and grew silent. "I cannot help loving! Without it there is no life. The only good there is in life is to have love-affairs. Mine never stop in the middle, and I will bring this one to a successful issue."

"*Bonne chance, mon ami,*" said the Frenchman.

We did not hear what followed because they went around the corner, and we heard their steps from the other side. They were going down the steps and a few minutes later they came out through a side door and were very much surprised to see us. I blushed when Marquis D—— came up to me, and I felt terribly when, upon leaving the castle, he offered me his arm. I could not refuse, and we walked to the carriage back of L—— M——, who was walking with his friend. I was offended by what the Frenchman had said of me, though I secretly acknowledged that he mentioned only what I had felt; but the words of the marquis surprised and provoked me by their coarseness. I was tormented by the thought that I had heard his words and that, in spite of it, he was not afraid of me.

I loathed his proximity to me, and, without looking at him, without answering him, and trying to keep my arm in such a way as not to hear him, I hurriedly walked behind L—— M—— and the Frenchman. The marquis was saying something about the beautiful landscape, about the unexpected happiness of meeting me, and something else, but I was not listening to him. I was all that time thinking of my husband, of my son, of Russia. I was ashamed of something, sorry for something, desiring something, and was hurrying home to my lonely room in the Hôtel de Bade, in order to reflect at liberty upon what was rising in my soul. But L—— M—— walked leisurely. To the carriage there was quite a distance yet, and my gentleman, I thought, persisted in slowing down his steps, as though attempting to stop me. "It is impossible!" I thought, and determinately walked faster. But he positively held me back and even pressed my hand. L—— M—— turned around the corner, and we were all alone. I felt terribly.

"Pardon me," I said, coldly, and wanted to free my hand, but the lace of the sleeve caught in his button. He bent with his breast toward me and began to unhook it, and his gloveless fingers touched my hand. A novel sensation, intermediate between terror and enjoyment, ran up my back like a chill. I looked at him so as to express with my cold glance all the loathing which I felt for him; but instead, my glance expressed fright and agitation.

His burning, moist eyes, right near my face, looked passionately at me, at my neck, at my bosom; both his hands were fingering my arm above the wrist; his open lips were saying something: they were saying that he loved me, that I was everything to him; and his lips came nearer to mine and his hands pressed mine more firmly and burned me.

A fire ran through my veins; my eyes grew dark: I trembled, and the words with which I wanted to stop him

dried up in my throat. Suddenly I felt a kiss on my cheek, and I, all in a tremble and chilling, stopped and glanced at him. Having no strength to say anything or to move, I, in expectancy, waited and wished for something. All that lasted but a moment. But that moment was terrible! I saw all of him in that one moment.

I now understood his face so well, — that abrupt, low brow showing underneath his straw hat and resembling that of my husband; that beautiful straight nose with the large, open nostrils, that long, sharply pointed, pomaded moustache and little beard, those cleanly shaven cheeks, and that sunburnt neck. I hated him, I was afraid of him, — he was so strange to me. But at that moment the agitation and passion of that strange man affected me so powerfully, I wanted so insuperably to abandon myself to the kisses of that coarse and beautiful mouth, to the embraces of those white hands with the thin veins and with the rings on their fingers, and I was so drawn to throw myself headlong into the suddenly opened, attracting abyss of forbidden pleasures! —

"I am so unfortunate," I thought, "so let more and more misfortunes be gathered upon my head."

He embraced me with one arm and bent down to my face. "Let more and more shame and sin be heaped upon my head."

"*Je vous aime*," he whispered, in that voice which so much resembled that of my husband. I thought of my husband and my child as of once dear beings between whom and me everything was now ended. But suddenly L—— M——'s voice, calling me, was heard around the bend of the road. I came to my senses, tore my hand away from him, and, without looking at him, almost ran up to L—— M——. We seated ourselves in the carriage, and only then I glanced at him. He doffed his hat and asked me something, smiling. He did not under-

stand the inexpressible loathing which I experienced toward him at that moment.

My life appeared so unfortunate to me, my future so hopeless, the past so black! L—— M—— was talking to me, but I did not understand her words. It seemed to me that she was speaking to me only from a sense of pity, in order to conceal the contempt which I provoked in her. The kiss burned my cheek with shame, and the thought of my husband and child were intolerable to me.

When I was left alone in my room I thought that I should now be able to reflect upon my condition, but I felt terribly by myself. I did not finish the tea which was brought to me, and, without knowing why, I with feverish haste began to prepare myself to go to Heidelberg by the evening train.

When I sat down with the maid in the empty car, and the engine started, and the fresh air was wafted upon me through the window, I began to reflect, and the past and future began to present themselves more clearly to me. All my married life from the day we left for St. Petersburg suddenly presented itself to me in a new light and lay as a reproach upon my conscience. I now for the first time thought vividly of our early life in the country, and of our plans. For the first time the question occurred to me, "What have my pleasures during all that time been?" and I felt myself guilty in respect to him.

"But why did he not stop me? Why was he double-faced before me? Why did he avoid explanations, and why did he offend me?" I asked myself. "Why did he not use all the power of love over me? Or did he not love me?" However guilty he may have been, the kiss of a strange man was there on my cheek, and I felt it. The nearer we came to Heidelberg the more vividly did I think of my husband and the more terrible did the impending meeting appear to me. "I will tell him everything, everything; I will cover everything with tears of

repentance," I thought, "and he will forgive me." But I did not know myself what that "everything" was, and did not myself believe that he would forgive me.

The moment I entered my husband's room and saw his calm, though surprised, face, I felt that I had nothing to tell him, nothing to confess, and nothing to ask forgiveness for. I was to remain with the unuttered grief and repentance.

"What has made you come?" he said. "I was going to come to you to-morrow." But, upon looking closer at my face, he seemed to be frightened. "What is it? What is the matter with you?" he said.

"Nothing," I replied, with difficulty keeping back my tears. "I have come to stay. Let us go to Russia to-morrow, if possible."

He for quite awhile looked silently and attentively at me.

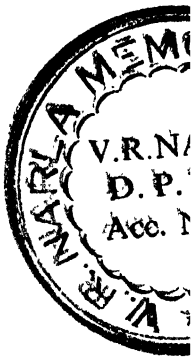
"Tell me what has happened to you!" he said.

I involuntarily blushed and lowered my eyes. In his eyes there flashed a feeling of provocation and anger. I was frightened at the thoughts which might come to him, and so I said, with an exercise of hypocrisy, of which I had not thought myself capable:

"Nothing has happened. I simply felt dull and lonely, and I have been thinking a great deal about our life and about you. I have so long been guilty in respect to you! Why do you take me to places where you do not like to go? I have long been guilty in respect to you," I repeated, and again tears stood in my eyes. "Let us go to the country, and for ever!"

"Ah, my dear, let us avoid sentimental scenes!" he said, coldly. "I am glad you want to go back to the country, because we have little money left; but as to being there for ever, that is an idle dream. I know that you will not endure it there. But, here, you had better drink some tea," he concluded, getting up, in order to call a servant.

I imagined everything he might think of me, and I was offended by the terrible thoughts which I ascribed to him, as I met the unsteady and apparently abashed glance which was directed upon me. "No, he does not want to, and he cannot, understand me!" I said that I wanted to go out to look at the baby, and went away from him. I wanted to be alone and weep, weep, weep.



IV.

THE long unheated, empty Nikólskoe house was again revived, but that which lived in it was not revived. Mamma was no more, and we were alone face to face. Now we no longer needed solitude, — it oppressed us. The winter passed the more disagreeably for me, since I was ill and did not regain my strength until after the birth of my second son. The relations between my husband and me remained as cold and friendly as during our city life, but in the country every deal, every wall and divan, reminded me of what he had been to me and of what I had lost. It seemed as though an unforgiven insult had come between us, as though he were punishing me for something and acting as though he did not notice it himself. There was nothing to ask forgiveness for, nor was there any cause for asking his mercy: he was punishing me only by not giving to me, as before, all of himself, all his soul; but he did not give it to anybody or to anything, as though he no longer had it.

At times it occurred to me that he only pretended in order to vex me, and that the former feeling was still living in him, so I tried to rouse it. But he every time seemed to avoid explanations, as though suspecting me of duplicity, and was afraid of sentimentalities as of something ridiculous. His glance and tone said: "I know everything, I know everything. There is no use in talking; I know everything you wish to say. I know also that you will say one thing and will do another."

At first I was offended by this fear of frankness, but later I became accustomed to the thought that it was not frankness, but the absence of any need of frankness. My tongue would not have moved now to tell him that I loved him, or to ask him to say the prayers with me, or to call him to listen to my music. Between us were felt certain conditions of propriety. We lived each apart, he with his occupations, in which I had no need and no desire to participate, and I with my idleness, which did not offend and grieve him as formerly. The children were too small yet, and could not unite us.

But spring came. Kátya and Sónya came for the summer to the country; our Nikólskoe house was being rebuilt, and so we moved to Pokróvskoe. It was the same old Pokróvskoe house, with its terrace, with the folding table and the piano in the light parlour, and with my old room with the white curtains, and my, as it were, forgotten girlish dreams. In this room were two little beds, one, my old bed, in which I at night crossed tossing plump Kokósha, and the other, a smaller one, from which Ványa's little face peeped out from his swaddling-clothes.

After crossing them I frequently stopped in the middle of the quiet room, and suddenly old, forgotten, youthful visions rose from all the corners, from the walls, from the curtains. Old voices began to sing girls' songs. Where were now those visions? Where were those soft, sweet songs? Everything which I had hardly dared to hope for had come to pass. My indistinct, mingling dreams had become a reality, and reality had become a heavy, hard, and cheerless life. And yet everything was the same: the same garden could be seen through the window; the same open space, the same road, the same bench, over yonder above the ravine; the same nightingales' songs were borne from the pond; the same lilacs were in full bloom; the same moon stood above the

house; and yet everything had changed so terribly, so impossibly!

All that could be so dear and near now was cold! Just as of old we, Kátya and I, now sat softly in the drawing-room, speaking of him. But Kátya was wrinkled and sallow; her eyes no longer sparkled with joy and hope, but expressed sympathetic grief and compassion. We no longer went into ecstasies over him as in former days: we judged him; we did not marvel why and wherefore we were happy, and not as in former days did we wish to tell to the whole world what we were thinking about. We, like conspirators, whispered to each other, and for the hundredth time we asked ourselves why everything had become so sad.

He was still the same, only the wrinkle between his eyebrows was deeper, there were more gray hairs on his temples; but his deep, attentive glance was now continually shrouded from me. I, too, was still the same, but there was no love, and no desire to love, in me. There was no need of work, no contentment with myself. And my former religious ecstasies and my former love for him, my former fulness of life seemed so remote to me. I should not now have understood that which then had seemed so clear and just: the happiness of living for another. Why for another, when there was no pleasure even in living for myself?

I had completely given up music ever since I left for St. Petersburg; but now the old piano and the old music attracted me.

One day I was not well and I stayed at home; Kátya and Sónya had gone with him to Nikólskoe to look at the new structure. The tea-table was set; I went down and, waiting for them, sat down at the piano. I opened the sonata "*Quasi una fantasia*," and began to play it. There was no one present to hear or see me, and the windows to the garden were open; the familiar, sad, and

solemn sounds were borne through the room. I finished the first part and, quite unconsciously, from old habit, turned around to the corner where he used to sit and listen to me. But he was not there. The long-untouched chair stood in its corner; through the window a lilac-bush could be seen against the bright sunset, and the freshness of evening poured in through the open windows. I leaned against the piano, with both my hands covered my face, and fell to musing. I sat thus for a long time, painfully recalling the irretrievable past, and timidly thinking of the present. Ahead of me there seemed to be nothing, as though I wished nothing and hoped for nothing.

"Is it possible I have outlived myself?" I thought. I raised my head in terror and, to forget myself and not to think, I again began to play the same andante. "My God!" I thought, "forgive me if I am guilty, or return to me all that was so beautiful in my soul, or instruct me what to do and how to live now!"

The noise of wheels could be heard on the grass, and before the porch and on the terrace could be heard the cautious, familiar steps, and they grew silent. My former feeling no longer responded to these familiar steps. When I was through, steps were heard behind me, and a hand lay on my shoulder.

"How clever of you to play this sonata," he said.

I was silent.

"Have you not yet had tea?"

I gave a negative shake of my head and did not turn around, in order not to betray the traces of agitation which were still left on my face.

"They will be here soon. The horse was a little restive, and so they are walking down the highway," he said.

"Let us wait for them," I said, going out upon the terrace, in the hope that he would follow me; but he asked about the children, and went out to them. Again his presence, his simple, kind voice bereft me of my con-

viction that I had lost anything. What else was I to wish for? He was kind, gentle, and a good husband and father, — I did not know myself what was lacking.

I went out on the veranda and sat down under the canvas of the terrace upon the same bench I had sat upon on the day of our declaration of love. The sun had set; it was getting dark and a gloomy vernal cloud hung over the house and garden; only beyond the trees could be seen a clear strip of the sky with the dying twilight and an evening star just bursting into light. Over everything hovered the shadow of a light cloud, and everything was awaiting a light spring rain. The wind died down; not one leaf, not one grass-blade was stirring; the odour of the lilac-bushes and elders was so strong in the garden and upon the terrace that it seemed the whole air was in bloom: it came in gusts, now weakening, now growing stronger, and I felt like closing my eyes and seeing and hearing nothing, but inhaling that sweet fragrance.

The dahlias and rose-bushes, not yet in bloom, stretching out motionless in the black, dug-up earth of the garden-bed, seemed to be growing slowly upward along their white, planed-off supports. The frogs croaked lustily and penetratingly near the ravine, as though for the last time before the rain which would drive them into the water. One thin, incessant, aqueous sound rose above this din. The nightingales called each other at intervals, and could be heard agitatedly flitting from place to place. A nightingale this spring again tried to settle in the bush near the window, and as I came out I heard him fly over into the avenue, where he gave one roll of trills and grew silent, also in expectancy of something.

I endeavoured in vain to calm myself: I was waiting and feeling sorry for something.

He returned from up-stairs and sat down at my side.

"It looks as though our people will get wet," he said.

"Yes," I said, and we were both silent for quite awhile.

The windless cloud dropped lower and lower; the air grew calmer, more fragrant and motionless, and suddenly a drop fell and seemed to rebound from the canvas awning of the terrace; another broke against the pebbles of the path; there was a splash against the burdocks, and there came down large drops of a refreshing, increasing rain. The nightingales and frogs were silenced; only the thin, aqueous sound, though appearing more remote through the rain, was still in the air, and a bird, apparently finding shelter in the dry leaves, was uttering its even, monotonous sounds somewhere near the terrace. He arose and was on the point of leaving.

"Where are you going?" I asked, holding him back. "It is so nice here."

"I must send them an umbrella and galoshes," he replied.

"It is not necessary: the rain will soon be over."

He agreed with me, and we remained near the balustrade of the terrace. I leaned with my arm on the slippery, wet rail and bent my head forward. The fresh rain dropped unevenly on my hair and neck. The cloud, growing lighter and thinner, exhausted itself over us; the even sound of the rain gave way to that of intermittent drops falling from above and from the leaves. Again the frogs croaked down below; again the nightingales fluttered and began to trill, now on one side and now on another. Everything cleared up in front of us.

"How nice it is!" he said, sitting down on the balustrade and passing his hand through my wet hair.

This simple caress acted upon me like a reproach, and I wanted to cry.

"What more does a man want?" he said. "I am now so contented that I need nothing more: I am quite happy!"

"You used to talk differently to me about your happiness," I thought to myself "No matter how great it was, you said that you wanted something more and more.

Now you are satisfied and calm, while in my heart there seem to be unexpressed repentance and unwept tears."

"I, too, feel well," I said, "but I am also sad because everything before me is so nice. In me everything is so incoherent and empty, and I wish for something, while here it is so beautiful and quiet. Does not some pining mingle with your enjoyment of Nature, as though you wished for something of the past?"

He took his hand away from my head and was silent for a moment.

"Yes, that used to be the case with me, especially in the spring," he said, as though recalling something. "I, too, used to sit up nights, wishing and hoping, and those were good nights! But then everything was ahead, and now everything is behind. Now I am satisfied with what there is, and I feel fine," he concluded, with such careless confidence that, however painful it was for me to hear it, I believed that he was telling the truth.

"And you wish for nothing?" I asked.

"Nothing impossible," he replied, guessing my sentiment. "You are getting your head wet," he added, caressing me like a child, and again passing his hand through my hair. "You envy the leaves and grass because the rain wets them; you would like to be the grass, the leaves, and the rain, while I rejoice looking at them, as at anything in the world which is good, young, and happy."

"And you are not sorry for anything in the past?" I continued to ask, feeling that my heart was getting heavier and heavier.

He mused awhile and again grew silent. I saw that he wanted to give me an entirely frank reply.

"No!" he answered, briefly.

"It is not true! It is not true!" I said, turning around to him and looking him in the eye. "Are you not sorry for the past?"

"No!" he repeated once more. "I am thankful for it, but I do not regret the past."

"And would not like to bring it back?" I asked.

He turned aside and began to look into the garden.

"I do not wish it any more than I should wish to have wings grow on me," he said. "It is not possible!"

"Would you not improve the past? Do you not reproach yourself or me?"

"Never! Everything was for the best!"

"Listen!" I said, touching his hand, that he might turn around to me. "Tell me why you never told me that you wanted me to live as you wanted; why you gave me the liberty which I did not know how to use; why you stopped teaching me. If you had only wanted to, and if you had guided me differently, there would have been nothing, nothing," I said, in a voice in which there was ever more strongly expressed cold vexation and reproach, and not my former love.

"What would there not have been?" he said, turning to me in surprise. "There is nothing as it is. Everything is all right. All is very well," he added, smiling.

"Is it possible that he does not understand, or, worse still, that he does not want to understand?" I thought, and tears stood in my eyes.

"It would not have happened that, although innocent in regard to you, I should be punished by your indifference and even contempt," I suddenly burst out. "It would not have happened that without any fault of mine you have suddenly taken away from me everything which was dear to me."

"What are you saying, my dear?" he said, as though not understanding my words.

"No, let me speak now — You have taken away from me your confidence, love, respect even; after all that has happened I will not believe that you love me. No, I must tell you at once what has been tormenting me so

long," I again interrupted him. "Am I to be blamed for not knowing life, while you made me find it out for myself? Am I to be blamed because now, when I myself have come to understand what is to be done, when I have been struggling for more than a year to return to you, you push me aside, as though not understanding what I want? And you are doing this in such a way that I cannot reproach you, while I am guilty and wretched. Yes, you want to throw me again into that life which might have caused your misfortune and mine."

"In what way have I made you see this?" he asked me, with genuine terror and surprise.

"Did you not say yesterday, — and you have been saying it all the time, — that I shall not get used to our life here, and that we must again go to St. Petersburg for the winter, although that city is hateful to me?" I continued. "Instead of supporting me, you avoid all frankness, every sincere and tender word with me. And then, when I shall have fallen completely, you will reproach me, and rejoice at my fall."

"Hold on, hold on!" he said to me, sternly and coldly. "It is not good what you are saying there. It only proves that you are not well disposed toward me, that you do not — "

"That I do not love you? Speak! Speak!" I finished for him, and tears burst forth from my eyes. I sat down on the bench, and covered my face with my handkerchief.

"That is the way he has understood me!" I thought, trying to keep back the sobs that were strangling me. "Our former love is at an end," a voice said in my heart. He did not come up to me, did not console me. He was offended by what I had told him. His voice was calm and dry.

"I do not know what it is you reproach me for," he began; "if because I have not loved you as before — "

"Loved!" I muttered into my handkerchief, and bitter tears flowed more copiously upon it.

"The fault is with time and with us. Each period has its own love—" He was silent. "Shall I tell you the whole truth, now that you want me to be frank? Just as during that year, when I first knew you, I passed whole sleepless nights thinking of you, and stirred up my love, and that love grew and grew in my heart, even so in St. Petersburg and abroad I stayed awake terrible nights, breaking up and crushing the love which tormented me. I did not break it up, but I broke up that which tormented me, and I became quieter, while I still love you, but with another love."

"Yes, you call it love, but it is a torment," I muttered. "Why did you allow me to live in society, if it seemed so noxious to you that you would even have lost your love for me on account of it?"

"Not society, my dear," he said.

"Why did you not make use of your power?" I continued. "Why did you not bind, or kill me? I should be better off now than losing all that formed my happiness; I should feel better and not so ashamed."

I again sobbed and covered my face.

Just then Kátya and Sónya, cheerful and wet, came up on the terrace with loud talking and laughter; but, upon seeing us, they grew quiet and immediately went out.

We were long silent after they had gone; I wept all my tears, and felt easier. I looked up at him. He sat leaning his head on his arm and wanted to say something in reply to my glance, but only drew a deep sigh, and again leaned on his arm.

I walked over to him and took his arm away. He turned his thoughtful glance upon me.

"Yes," he said, as though continuing his thoughts, "all of us, but especially you women, must in person live

through all the nonsense of life in order to return to life itself; it is impossible to trust another in this matter. You were then far from having lived through all that charming and agreeable nonsense which I admired in you; I have allowed you to live through it, and I have felt that I had no right to embarrass you, although for me that time had passed long ago."

"Why did you yourself go through all that nonsense and allow me to live through it, if you love me?" I said.

"Because you would have gladly believed me, but you could not do that; you had to find it out for yourself, and you have."

"You reflected, you reflected a great deal," I said. "You loved little."

We were silent again.

"What you have just said is cruel, but it is true," he said, rising suddenly, and walking up and down the terrace. "Yes, it is true, I was to blame," he added, stopping in front of me. "Either I had no right to let myself love you at all, or I should have loved you more simply, yes."

"Let us forget everything," I said, timidly.

"No, what is past cannot be brought back, never," and his voice became softer as he said that.

"Everything has come back," I said, placing my hand upon his shoulder.

He took my hand away and pressed it.

"No, I did not tell the truth when I said that I did not regret the past. Yes, I regret it; I weep for that past love which is not and never can be again. Who is to be blamed for it? I do not know. There is left a love, but not the one that was before: its place is left, but anguish has made that love lose its strength and sap, and there are only left recollections and gratitude; but—"

"Don't speak that way!" I interrupted him. 'Let everything be as of old — It can be, can it not? Yes?" I asked, looking him in the eye. But his eyes were clear and calm, and they did not look deeply into mine.

As I was speaking I felt that what I wished and asked him for was no longer possible. He smiled a calm, gentle, and, as I thought, an old man's smile.

"How young you still are, and how old I am," he said. "There is no longer in me that which you seek. Why deceive myself?" he added, continuing to smile himself.

I stood silently near him, but my soul became quieter.

"We shall not try to repeat life," he continued, "we shall not lie to ourselves. Thank God there are no longer the old troubles and agitations! We have nothing to search for and be agitated about. We have found what we wanted, and enough happiness has fallen to our share. Now we must stand aside and give a chance to this one here," he said, pointing to the nurse who came up with Ványa and stopped at the door of the terrace. "That's the way, my dear," he concluded, bending my head to him and kissing it. Not a lover, but an old friend, was kissing me.

From the garden ever stronger and sweeter rose the fragrant freshness of night; the sounds and the silence grew more solemn, and upon the sky the stars burned ever more frequently. I looked at him, and suddenly I felt lighter, as though that sickly moral nerve which had made me suffer had been removed from me. I suddenly understood clearly and calmly that the feeling of those days was irretrievably lost, like that time itself, and that it not only was impossible to bring it back, but that it would only cause hardships and embarrassment. And, when it comes to that, was that time which seemed to me so happy really so good? And all that was so long, so long ago! —

"Well, it is time to drink tea!" he said, and we went together to the drawing-room. In the door I again met the nurse with Ványa. I took the child into my arms, covered his bared red little legs, pressed him close to me and kissed him, barely touching him with my lips. He moved his tiny hand with the sprawling, wrinkled fingers as though in sleep, and opened his dim little eyes as though looking for something or recalling something; suddenly these eyes were directed toward me, a spark of intelligence flashed through them, his fat lips puckered and opened for a smile. "Mine, mine, mine!" I thought, with a blissful tension in all my limbs, pressing him to my breast and with difficulty restraining myself from causing him pain. I began to kiss his cold little feet, his stomach, his hands, and his little head, just covered with hair. My husband came up to me; I quickly covered the baby's face and again uncovered it.

"Iván Sergyéich!" said my husband, touching his chin with his finger. But I quickly covered up Iván Sergyéich. Nobody but me was to look for any length of time at him. I glanced at my husband; his eyes laughed, looking into mine, and for the first time after a long interval it was again easy and a joy for me to look into his.

With that day ended my romance with my husband: the old sentiment became a precious, irretrievable reminiscence, and a new feeling of love for my children, and for the father of my children, laid the foundation for another, an entirely different and happy life, which has not ended even at the present moment.

POLIKÚSHKA

A Novel

1860

POLIKÚSHKA

A Novel

I.

"As you wish, madam! Only the Dutlóvs are to be pitied. They are every one of them fine fellows; and if we do not present at least one manorial servant, one of theirs will certainly have to go," said the clerk. "As it is, all point to them. However, as you wish it."

He changed the position of his right hand over his left, holding both before his belly, bent his head to the other side, drew in his thin lips almost with a smacking sound, rolled his eyes, and grew silent with the obvious intention of keeping a long silence and of listening without retort to all the nonsense which the lady would certainly tell him.

He was a clerk chosen from among the manorial servants. He was clean shaven and wore a long coat of a special cut for clerks, and was standing one autumn evening before his mistress with a report. According to the conception of the mistress, this report consisted in listening to accounts of past estate operations and laying out the future ones. According to Egór Mikháylovich's, the clerk's, conception, a report was a ceremony consisting in standing up straight on both his toed-out feet in the corner, with his face turned

to the divan, listening to all kinds of irrelevant tattle, and by all kinds of means exasperating the mistress to a point when she would hurriedly and impatiently say, "All right, all right!" to all of Egór Mikháylovich's propositions.

Just now the question under discussion was the conscription. After St. Mary's Intercession, three men had to be presented. Two had unquestionably been determined upon by fate, through the coincidence of domestic, moral, and economic conditions. In regard to these there could be no wavering or discussion, neither on the side of the Commune, nor on the mistress's side, nor on the side of public opinion. The third one was in dispute. The clerk wanted to save all three young Dutlóvs and to offer the married manorial servant, Polikúshka, who had a very bad reputation and who had frequently been caught stealing bags, lines, and hay; but the mistress, who had often shown favours to Polikúshka's ragged children, and who had been mending his morality by means of gospel precepts, did not want to give him up. At the same time she was not ill-disposed toward the Dutlóvs, whom she did not know and had never seen. For some reason she was not able to perceive, and the clerk could not make up his mind to explain it to her outright, that if Polikúshka would not go, Dutlóv would certainly have to.

"I do not wish the Dutlóvs any misfortune," she said, feelingly. "If you do not wish it, you will have to pay three hundred roubles for a recruit," was the reply which ought to have followed upon that, but diplomacy did not permit it.

And thus Egór Mikháylovich stood calmly, even leaning slightly against the doorpost, but preserving an expression of servility upon his countenance, and watched the lady's quivering lips and the bobbing of the ruche on her cap, together with her shadow upon the wall below the picture. He did not consider it in the least necessary to make out the meaning of her words. The lady spoke

long and much. He had a spasm of yawning back of his ears, but he cleverly changed that spasm into a cough by putting his hand over his mouth and making a pretence at clearing his throat.

I lately saw Lord Palmerston sitting with his hat on, while a member of the opposition thundered against the ministry, and suddenly getting up and replying to all points of his opponent in a speech which lasted three hours. When I saw that I was not surprised, because I had had occasion of seeing something similar a thousand times between Egór Mikháylovich and his mistress. Either because he was afraid of falling asleep, or because it seemed to him that she was too much carried away, he transferred the weight of his anatomy from his left leg to his right, and began with a sacramental exordium, as he always began:

"As you please, madam, only — only there is a gathering now in front of my office, and we must make an end of it. The official order says that the recruits have to be taken to town by St. Mary's Intercession. The peasants point to the Dutlóvs and to no one else. The Commune does not consider our interests: they do not care if we ruin the Dutlóvs. I know what a hard time they have had. Ever since I have had charge of things here, they have been poor. The old man has just had the pleasure of seeing his younger nephew, when they are to be ruined again. I am caring for your property, permit me to tell you, as though it were my own. It is a pity, madam, whatever your pleasure may be. They are no kith nor kin to me, and I have received nothing from them — "

"Neither did I have the intention, Egór," the lady interrupted him, though she at once concluded that he had been bought by the Dutlóvs.

"But theirs is the best peasant farm in the whole Pokróvskoe: they are God-fearing, industrious men. The old man has been a church elder for thirty years; he does

not drink, does not swear, and attends church." (The clerk knew how to get at her.) "The main thing is, permit me to inform you, that he has only two sons; the rest are his nephews. The Commune points to them, but, in reality, he ought to cast a double lot. Others, on account of their want, have divided up with three sons, and now they are all right, but these have to suffer for their virtue."

Here the lady was entirely at a loss: she did not understand what a "double lot" and what the "virtue" was; she only heard sounds and watched the nankeen buttons on the clerk's coat: the upper button he apparently buttoned less frequently, so it was firmly attached, but the middle button had been pulled out and hung loose, so that it ought long ago to have been sewed on again. As all know, at a talk, especially on business matters, it is not at all necessary to understand what one is told, but one must remember precisely that which one intends to say. Even thus the lady acted.

"Why do you not want to understand me, Egór Mikháylovich?" she said. "I do not want Dutlóv to be a soldier. It seems to me that you know me well enough to understand that I am doing all I can to help my peasants, and that I do not wish them harm. You know that I am ready to sacrifice everything in order to free myself from this sad necessity and not to have to give up Dutlóv and Khoryúshkin." (I do not know whether it occurred to the clerk that in order to free herself from the sad necessity it was not necessary to sacrifice everything, but that three hundred roubles would do it; anyway, this thought might have occurred to him.) "But I will tell you this much: I will not give up Polikúshka for anything. When, after the last affair with the clock, he himself confessed and wept, and swore that he would mend his ways, I spoke with him for a long time, and I saw that he was touched and that he sincerely repented

of his deed." ("Off she goes!" thought Egór Mikháylovich and began to watch the syrup which was in her glass of water. "Is it orange or lemon? I suppose it is something pungent," he thought.) "Seven months have passed since, and he has not been drunk once, and he behaves beautifully. His wife tells me that he is a different man now. How can you expect me to punish him now since he has improved so? And is it not inhuman to send a man to the army when he has five children and is all alone? No, you had better not mention that to me, Egór —"

And the lady sipped from her glass.

Egór Mikháylovich watched the water gurgling down her throat, and then he retorted, briefly and sharply:

"So you order me to determine on Dutlóv?"

The lady clapped her hands.

"Why do you not want to understand me? I do not wish the Dutlóvs any misfortune, and I have nothing against them. God is my witness that I am always ready to do something for them." (She looked at the picture in the corner, but remembered that it was not God. "Well, that makes no difference," she thought. It is strange she did not think of the three hundred roubles.) "But what am I to do? How do I know what ought to be done? I can't know it. I depend upon you: you know what I want. Do so as to satisfy all, according to the law. What is to be done? They are not the only ones. Everybody has troublesome moments. Only I will not allow Polikúshka to go. You must understand that that would be terrible on my part."

She would have spoken much longer, she was so animated; but just then a chambermaid entered the room.

"What is it, Dunyásha?"

"A peasant has come to ask Egór Mikháylovich whether he commands the gathering to wait?" said Dunyásha, looking angrily at Egór Mikháylovich. ("What

a clerk!" she thought. "He has excited the lady, and now she will not let me fall asleep before two o'clock.")

"So go, Egór," said the lady, "and do the best you can."

"Yes, madam." He said nothing about Dutlóv. "Whom do you command me to send to the gardener for the money?"

"Has Petrúsha not yet returned from town?"

"No, madam."

"Can't Nikoláy drive down there?"

"Father is down with the lumbago," said Dunyásha.

"Shall you not order me to drive there to-morrow?" said the clerk.

"No, you are wanted here, Egór." The lady fell to musing. "How much money is it?"

"Four hundred and sixty roubles, madam."

"Send Polikúshka," said the lady, casting a determined look at Egór Mikháylovich.

Egór Mikháylovich, without opening his teeth, stretched his lips, as though to smile; he did not change the rest of his face.

"Yes, madam."

"Send him to me!"

"Yes, madam," and Egór Mikháylovich went to the office.

II.

POLIKÚSHKA, as an insignificant and slovenly man, and as being from another village, did not enjoy the protection of housekeeper, or butler, or clerk, or chambermaid, and his "corner" was the worst imaginable, although there were seven in his family.

The "corners" had been built by the late master. They were arranged as follows: In a stone hut, twenty-five feet square, there stood in the middle a Russian oven; around it there was a "colidor," as the manorial servants called it, and in every corner a "corner" was fenced off with boards. There was, consequently, little space in each, especially little in Polikúshka's corner, the farthest from the door. A nuptial couch with a quilt coverlet and chintz pillows, a cradle with a baby in it, a little three-legged table, on which the food was prepared, the clothes were washed, and all the house-goods placed, and on which Polikúshka himself worked (he was a veterinarian); vats, clothes, chickens, a calf, and the seven of the family filled the whole corner. Nobody would have been able to move, if the common oven had not offered one-fourth, upon which things and people were placed, and if it had not been possible to go out on the steps. To tell the truth, it was not possible: in October it was cold, and of warm clothes there was but one sheepskin coat for the whole seven of them; but the children could warm themselves by running, and the grown ones by working, or any of them by climbing on the oven, where it was often forty degrees Réaumur.

One would think that it was dreadful to live under

such conditions; but they did not mind it, — they managed to get along. Akulína washed the children and fed them and her husband; she spun, and wove, and bleached her linen, cooked and baked in the common oven, and exchanged words and gossip with her neighbours. Her monthly allowance of food sufficed not only for the children, but as an extra for her cow. The wood was free, and so was the feed for the cattle. Also some hay from the stable fell to their share. They had a garden strip. The cow had had a calf; there were also chickens of their own.

Polikúshka was attached to the stable. He looked after two stallions, and bled the horses and cattle; he cleaned hoofs, lanced sores, and put on ointments of his own invention, and for this he received money and provisions. There were also the manorial oats which they had, and in the village there was a peasant who regularly every month gave twenty pounds of mutton for two measures of the oats.

One could get along, if there were not a grief to account for, and the grief for the family was great indeed. Polikúshka had in his youth been working in a stud, in another village. The groom, under whose charge he was, was the first thief in the whole district: he was deported to Siberia. Polikúshka had received his instruction from this groom, and, being young, he became accustomed to "these trifles," so that, no matter how much he tried, he could not cure himself of the habit. He was a young, weak man; he had no parents, and there was no one to teach him.

Polikúshka liked to drink, but he did not like things to lie around loose. A strap, a saddle-cloth, a lock, a coupling-pin, or anything more expensive, found a place with Polikéy Ilích. There were everywhere people who accepted these things and paid for them in wine or money, according to agreement. These earnings are the easiest,

say the people: one needs nothing here, neither study, nor work, and when you have tried it once, you do not wish to do any other work. There is just one bad thing about these earnings: although the things come easy and cheap, and such a life is pleasant, bad people sometimes spoil your trade, and you have to pay for it all at once, and then you are not especially glad of living.

Just so it had happened with Polikúshka. Polikúshka was married, and God gave him happiness: his wife, the cattle-keeper's daughter, was a healthy, intelligent, industrious woman, and she bore him children, one better than the other. Polikúshka did not abandon his trade, and everything went well. Suddenly he had bad luck, and he got caught. He got caught on a mere trifle: he had put away a peasant's leather reins. They were found, and he received a beating, and was taken to the lady, after which he was watched.

He was caught a second and a third time. The people put him to shame; the clerk threatened him with military service; his wife wept and grieved her life away; everything began to go topsyturvy.

He was a kind and not at all a bad man, only he was weak, liked to take a drink, and had become so used to it that he could not let it alone. His wife would scold him, and even beat him, when he came home drunk, and he would weep.

"I am an unfortunate," he would say, "and what shall I do? May my eyes burst, I will give it up, I will do it no more!"

Behold, two months later he would again go away from home; he would be drinking, and be gone for two days.

"He must be getting money somewhere," people would say.

His last affair was with the office clock. There was in the office an old wall clock, that had long been out of repair. He happened to come in by himself through the

open door: he was tempted by the clock, so he took it down and carried it away to town, where he disposed of it. It so happened that the shopkeeper, to whom he had sold the clock, was some kin to a manorial woman; when he came to the country for the holidays he told about the clock. They began to inquire about it, as though really anybody cared much about the clock. The clerk particularly was not fond of Polikúshka. The whole thing was found out. The lady was informed of it. The lady called up Polikúshka. He immediately fell down before her feet, and with feeling and touchingly, as his wife had instructed him, confessed his whole guilt. He acquitted himself well. The lady began to reason with him. She talked and talked, and preached to him about God, and virtue, and the life to come, and about his wife and children, and moved him to tears. The lady said:

"I shall forgive you, only you must promise me never to do it again."

"I sha'n't do it in all my life! May I go through the floor, and may my entrails be torn out, if I do!" said Polikúshka, weeping touchingly.

Polikúshka came home, and there bawled all day long like a calf, and lay on the oven. Since then nothing wrong had been noticed in Polikúshka. Only his life was not a joy to him: people looked upon him as a thief, and when the time of the conscription came, they all pointed to him.

As was said before, Polikúshka was a veterinarian. How he had suddenly become a veterinarian, nobody knew, least of all he himself. In the stable of the stud he had, under the deported groom, exercised no other function than that of cleaning the manure out of the enclosures, and sometimes grooming the horses and hauling water. He could not have learned it there. Then he was a weaver; then he worked in a garden and cleaned the paths; then for a punishment he broke bricks; then,

working out, he hired himself out as a janitor with a merchant. Consequently he had had no experience there, either.

During his last stay at home he slowly began to acquire a wide reputation as an unusual, even a supernatural, veterinarian. He bled horses once or twice; then he threw a horse and fumbled around in its thigh; then he demanded that the horse be taken to a trave, where he began to cut its frog to the quick, though the horse struggled and even whined, saying that that meant to "let the subungulate blood." Then he explained to a peasant that the blood ought to be let from both veins "for greater lightness," and began to strike the dull lancet with a mallet; then he pulled the selvage of his wife's kerchief underneath the belly of the innkeeper's horse. Finally he began to sprinkle vitriol on all kinds of sores, to put on wet compresses from a vial, and to give them sometimes internal doses, such as occurred to him. The more he tormented and killed the horses, the more people believed him, and the more horses were brought to him.

I feel that it is not quite proper for people of our class, for gentlemen, to laugh at Polikúshka. The artifice which he employed in order to gain confidence is the same which has affected our fathers and us, and will affect our children. A peasant, who with his belly presses down the head of his only mare, which not only forms his wealth, but is almost part of his family, and who in faith and terror looks at the solemn and frowning face of Polikúshka, and at his thin, bared arms, while his hands purposely press the painful spot and he boldly cuts the sound flesh with the secret thought, "The bow-legged one will get over it," and pretends that he knows where the blood is, and where the pus, where the dr[illegible] where the wet vein, while he holds with [illegible] bandage or a vitriol vial, — that peasant [illegible] pect that Polikúshka's hand could be [illegible] to cut with-

out knowing what he was doing. He himself could not do it. After the horse had been cut open, he would not reproach himself for having permitted it to be cut open without cause. I do not know how you feel about it, but I have experienced precisely the same with a doctor who, at my request, has tormented people who were near to my heart. A lancet and a mysterious whitish vial with a sublimate, and the words "apoplexy, piles, let blood, matter," and so forth, are they any different from "nerves, rheumatism, organisms," and so forth? *Wage du zu irren und zu träumen,* refers not so much to poets as to doctors and veterinarians.

III.

THAT very evening, while the gathering, choosing a recruit, was dining near the office in the chill murkiness of an October night, Polikúshka was sitting on the edge of the bed at the table and in a bottle mixing a horse medicine, about which he knew nothing. Here was sublimate, sulphur, Glauber's salt, and some grass, which Polikúshka had collected, having once come to the conclusion that this grass was good for asthma, and regarding it as proper also in other diseases.

The children were already lying down, two on the oven, two on the bed, and one in the cradle near which Akulína was sitting spinning. A dip from the unguarded manorial candles, in a wooden candlestick, was standing on the window, and, in order that her husband might not be disturbed in his important work, Akulína got up several times to snuff the dip with her fingers.

There were some freethinkers who regarded Polikúshka as a worthless veterinarian and a worthless man; others, again, and they were in the majority, looked upon him as a bad man, but a great master of his art. Akulína, however, notwithstanding the fact that she frequently scolded and even beat him, regarded him as unquestionably the first veterinarian and the first man in the world.

Polikúshka poured some ingredients into the palm of his hand. (He did not use a scale, and ironically referred to the Germans who used it by saying, "This is not an apothecary shop!") Polikúshka added this ingredient

which he had in his hand and stirred it all up; but it did not look enough to him, and so he added ten times as much.

"I will put in the whole lot, so it will raise better," he said to himself. Akulína swiftly lifted her head in response to her lord's voice, expecting some command; but, upon seeing that she was not concerned in the matter, she shrugged her shoulders. "He is clever, I must say!" she thought, and once more began to spin. The paper from which the ingredient had been emptied fell under the table. Akulína did not overlook that.

"Anyútka," she called out, "father has dropped something; pick it up!"

Anyútka thrust her thin, bare legs out from underneath a capote with which she was covered, like a kitten crawled under the table, and fetched the paper.

"Here, papa," she said, making with her chilled little feet a dive for the bed.

"Don't pus' me," screamed her younger sister, lisping, and in a sleepy voice.

"Look out!" said Akulína, and both heads were hid under the capote.

"If he offers me three roubles," said Polikúshka, corking up the bottle, "I will cure his horse. It is cheap at that," he added. "It's no little headache it gives me, I must say! Akulína, go and ask Nikíta for a little tobacco. I'll give it back to him to-morrow."

Polikúshka took out of his trousers a linden pipe-stem, which had once been painted, and had sealing-wax for a mouthpiece, and began to put on the pipe.

Akulína left the spinning-wheel and went out, without catching in the yarn, which was a hard matter to avoid. Polikúshka opened the cupboard, put the bottle inside of it, and tilted into his mouth the empty wine-bottle, but there was no brandy in it. He frowned, but when his wife brought the tobacco, and he filled the pipe, lighted

it, and sat down on the bed, his face shone with contentment and with the pride of a man who has finished his day's work. He was happy, either because he thought of how on the morrow he would take hold of the horse's tongue and pour down its throat that wonderful mixture, or because he reflected that a useful man is never refused anything, and that even now Nikíta had sent him some tobacco.

Suddenly the door, which was hanging on one hinge, was thrown back, and into the room entered the girl "from up there," not the second, but the third servant, who was kept to be sent on all kinds of errands. "Up there," as everybody knows, means the manor, even if it be down below. Aksyútka, as the girl was called, always flew like a bullet, whereat her arms did not bend, but swayed like a pendulum, according to the rapidity of her motion, not at her sides, but in front of her body; her cheeks were always redder than her pink dress; her tongue always moved as fast as her legs. She flew into the room and, for some reason getting hold of the oven, began to sway, and, as though wishing to utter by all means not more than two or three words at once, suddenly, out of breath, delivered the following, as she turned to Akulína:

"The lady has commanded Polikéy Ilích to come up there this very minute, so she has commanded — " She stopped, and with difficulty drew breath. "Egór Mikháylovich was at the lady's, they spoke about recruits, they mentioned Polikéy Ilích — Avdótya Nikoláevna has commanded him to come this very minute. Avdótya Nikoláevna has commanded " (again a sigh) "him to come this very minute."

Aksyútka looked for about half a minute at Polikúshka, at Akulína, at the children, who stuck their heads out from underneath their coverlets, picked up a nutshell which was lying on the oven, threw it at Anyútka, and, once more repeating "this very minute," like a whirlwind

flew out of the room, and the pendulums began to sway with customary rapidity across the line of motion.

Akulína got up again and fetched her husband's boots. They were worthless, torn, soldier's boots. She took the caftan down from the oven and handed it to him, without looking at him.

"Ilích, won't you change your shirt?"

"No," said Polikúshka.

Akulína did not once look at his face while he silently put on his boots and caftan, and it was well for her that she did not. Polikúshka's face was pale, his lower jaw was trembling, and in his eyes there was that tearful and submissive and deeply wretched expression which is found only in good, weak, and guilty persons. He combed his hair and was on the point of leaving; his wife stopped him, fixed the cord of his shirt, which was hanging over his coat, and put his cap on his head.

"Oh, Polikéy Ilích, does the lady want to see you?" was heard the voice of the joiner's wife beyond the partition.

It was but that very morning that the joiner's wife had had a heated dispute with Akulína on account of a pot of lye which Polikúshka's children had spilled, and in the first moment it gave her pleasure to hear that Polikúshka was called to the lady, for it certainly meant no good. Besides, she was a sly, diplomatic, and venomous woman. No one knew better than she how to cut one with a word; at least she thought so about herself.

"No doubt they want to send you to town to make some purchases," she continued. "I suppose she is after having a trustworthy man, and so she is sending you. In that case, Polikéy Ilích, please buy me a quarter of a pound of tea."

Akulína held back her tears, and her lips were compressed into an evil expression. Nothing would she have liked better than getting her fingers into the nasty hair

of that slut, the joiner's wife. But, as she looked at her children and thought that they would be left orphans and she a soldier-widow, she forgot the venomous joiner's wife, covered her face with her hands, sat down on the bed, and her head fell down on the pillows.

"Mamma, you are crussing me," said the lisping little girl, pulling her dress away from under her mother's elbow.

"I wish you were all dead! I have borne you for misfortune!" exclaimed Akulína and sobbed out loud, to the delight of the joiner's wife, who had not yet forgotten the lye of the morning.

IV.

HALF an hour passed. The baby began to cry, and Akulína got up to feed it. She was no longer weeping, but, leaning her still pretty, thin face upon her arms, she fixed her eyes on the flickering remnant of the candle, and thought of why she had married, why so many soldiers were needed, and how she could pay back the joiner's wife.

Her husband's steps were heard. She dried the vestiges of her tears and got up to let Polikúshka come in. Polikúshka entered with a dashing gait, threw his cap upon the bed, drew long puffs of breath, and ungirded himself.

"Well? What did the lady want you for?"

"Hem! We might have known! Polikúshka is no good! But when anything is up, who is wanted? Polikúshka."

"What is up?"

Polikúshka was in no hurry to answer. He lighted his pipe and spit out.

"She has commanded me to go to town to fetch some money from the merchant."

"To get some money?" asked Akulína.

Polikúshka smiled and shook his head.

"She is great on talking! 'You,' says she, 'are marked as an untrustworthy man, only I trust you more than anybody else.'" Polikúshka spoke loud in order that the neighbours might hear him. "'You have promised me to mend,' says she, 'so here is the first proof that I trust you: go,' says she, 'to the merchant, get the money, and

bring it back!' 'We,' says I, 'madam, we,' says I, 'are all your serfs, and we must serve you as we should serve God, because I feel that I can do everything for your comfort and must not swerve from any duty; whatever you will command I will do, because I am your slave.' " He again smiled that peculiar smile of a weak, good, guilty man. " 'So you will do it well?' says she. 'Do you understand that your fate depends upon it?' says she. 'Of course I understand that I might do anything. If people have said something against me, it is easy enough to slander a man, but I, it seems to me, have never contrived against your comfort.' I just talked to her so fine that my mistress softened. 'You will be my first servant,' says she." He was silent for a moment, and again the same smile was on his face. " I know how to speak with them. When I worked out, I was sometimes jumped upon by people. If I only had a chance to speak with them I greased them up so that they became smoother than silk."

" How much money is it?" Akulína asked again.

" Fifteen hundred roubles," Polikúshka answered, carelessly.

She shook her head.

" When will you go?"

" She has commanded me to go to-morrow. 'Take any horse you wish,' says she. 'Go to the office, and God be with you!' "

" The Lord be praised," said Akulína, rising and crossing herself. " May God help you, Ilích," she added, in a whisper, so that she might not be heard behind the partition, and holding him by the shirt-sleeve. " Ilích, listen to me! I implore you by Jesus Christ to kiss the cross and swear before leaving that you will not take a drop into your mouth."

" You don't suppose I will, when I am travelling with such money?" he blurted. " Somebody was playing the

piano there, oh, so awfully cleverly!" he added, after a moment's silence and smiling. "I think it was the young lady. I was standing up there before the lady, but there, behind the door, the miss was rattling it off fine. She just would let herself loose and roll it off so softly, — it was just a joy to listen. I should like to play myself, really I should. I'd study it out. I am a great hand at such things. Let me have a clean shirt for to-morrow."

They lay down to sleep happy.

V.

In the meantime there was a noisy gathering near the office. It was not a trifling matter. The peasants were out in full force, and while Egór Mikháylovich was with the mistress the heads were covered and more voices than before could be heard in the common conversation, and the voices were louder than before. The groan of the heavy voices, now and then interrupted by breathless, hoarse, shrieking speech, hovered in the air, and this groan, like the sound of a roaring sea, reached the windows of the lady, who experienced a nervous disquietude akin to the sensation provoked by a storm. It gave her a twinge of dread and discomfort. She seemed to feel that the voices would any minute grow louder, and that something would happen. "Why can't they do everything quietly, peacefully, without quarrelling, and without a noise," she thought, "in a Christian, fraternal, and religious manner?"

Several voices were speaking together, but louder than all shouted Fédor Ryezún, the carpenter. He was a doubler[1] and was attacking the Dutlóvs. Old man Dutlóv was defending himself; he stepped out from the crowd, behind which he had been standing, and, in a strangling voice, swinging his arms, and holding his beard, spoke so much through his nose that he himself would have found it hard to understand what he was saying. His children and nephews stood in a serried rank close to him. Old Dutlóv reminded one of the mother hen in the

[1] Doublers are families possessing two able-bodied men.

game of "Vulture." The vulture was Ryezún, and not Ryezún alone, but all the doublers and singlers, almost all men of the meeting, who were attacking Dutlóv.

Matters were like this: Dutlóv's brother had been made a soldier some thirty years before, and so he, being a tripler, did not wish to be in turn for the conscription, claiming that his brother's service exempted him, and demanding to be placed on a level with the doublers, among whom the common lot for the third recruit should be cast.

There were four more triplers, besides Dutlóv; but one of them was the elder, and the lady had excused him; from another family a recruit had been sent up the previous conscription. From the remaining two families two soldiers had been appointed. From these one had not come at all to the gathering, and only his wife stood sadly back of the crowd, hoping that somehow the wheel would turn in her favour; the other of the two appointed soldiers, red-haired Román, in a torn coat, though he was not poor, stood leaning against the porch and, with drooping head, kept silent all the time, except that now and then he glanced attentively at the loudest speaker, after which he again lowered his head. His whole form seemed to exhale wretchedness. Old Semén Dutlóv was a man to whom anybody, who knew him but slightly, would entrust hundreds and thousands of dollars for safe-keeping. He was a reserved, God-fearing, industrious man; he was, besides, a church elder. For this reason the excitement with which he spoke was the more striking.

Ryezún, the carpenter, on the other hand, was a tall, swarthy, riotous, drunken, bold man, especially glib in disputes and debates at the meetings and in the market-place with workmen, merchants, peasants, or gentlemen. Now he was calm and malicious, and from the height of his stature, with all the power of his sonorous voice and

oratorical talent, was crushing the drawling church elder, who was now completely lifted out from his peaceful rut.

Among the participants in the debate there was also round-faced, young-looking, square-headed, curly-bearded, thick-set Gerásim Kopýlov, one of the speakers who followed after Ryezún. He belonged to the younger generation and was distinguished for his sharp speech, and had already gained prominence in the meetings of the Commune. Then there was Fédor Mélnichny, a sallow, haggard, lank, stooping peasant, also young, with scant hair in his beard, and small eyes, always bilious and gloomy, finding a bad side in everything, and frequently puzzling the meetings by his unexpected and abrupt questions and remarks. Both these speakers were on Ryezún's side.

Besides these, two babblers now and then took part in the debate: one of them, with a most good-natured physiognomy and long blond beard, Khrapkóv, who kept saying all the time, "Now, my dear friend," and another, a small man, with a birdlike face, Zhidkóv, who, too, had a set phrase for everything, "which means, friends," and who addressed everybody and never spoke to the point. They were both now for one side, and now for the other, but nobody paid any attention to them. There were still others like them, but these two kept flitting about between the crowd, shouting more than the rest and frightening the lady; they were listened to less than the rest, but, stunned by the noise and din, they completely abandoned themselves to the pleasure of their itching tongues.

There were still many other characters among these peasants of the Commune: there were gloomy, decent, indifferent, timid ones; there were also women back of the men, with sticks in their hands; but of these I shall tell some other time, if God will grant me to do so. The crowd at large consisted of peasants who stood at the meeting as if at church; in the rear they conversed in a

whisper about domestic affairs, or about clearing the underbrush in the woods, or they waited in silence for the talkers to stop prattling.

Then there were the rich, whose well-being could neither be increased nor diminished by these meetings. Such was Ermíl, with a broad, shining face, whom the peasants called big-bellied because he was rich. Such also was Stárostin, upon whose face lay the self-satisfied expression of power: "Say what you please, but nobody will touch me. I have four sons, but not one of them will be made a soldier." Now and then the freethinkers, like Kopýlov and Ryezún, teased these also, but they replied calmly and firmly, with the consciousness of their inviolability.

If Dutlóv reminded one of the mother hen in the game of "Vulture," his lads did not exactly remind one of fledgelings; they did not toss about, or squeak, but stood silently in the rear. The eldest, Ignát, was about thirty years old; the second, Vasíli, was also married, but unfit as a soldier; the third, Ilyá, his nephew, who had but lately been married, a light-complexioned, ruddy-faced lad in a foppish sheepskin coat (he worked out as a driver), stood looking at the people, now and then scratching the back of his head below the cap, as though it were not at all his business, whereas it was he that the vultures were anxious to tear away.

"If it comes to that, my grandfather was a soldier himself," said one, "so I will decline to draw a lot myself. There is no law on that, my friend. At last conscription they shaved Mikhéich a soldier, although his uncle had not yet returned home."

"Neither your father nor your uncle has served the Tsar," Dutlóv was saying at the same time, "and you have served neither the masters, nor the Commune, but have only passed your days in drinking, so that your children had to divide up the property. You can't get along

yourself, so you point to others; but I was a hundred-man for ten years, and an elder, and have twice burned down, and nobody has helped me; and because there is peace and decency on our farm, you want to ruin me! Give me back my brother! I suppose he died there. Judge honestly and according to God's law, Orthodox people, and don't pay any attention to what a drunken fellow is babbling."

At the same time Gerásim was saying to Dutlóv:

"You are pointing to your brother; but he was not sent up by the Commune, but the masters punished him for his misdeeds, so he cannot serve you as an excuse."

Gerásim had hardly finished his speech, when sallow, lank Fédor Mélnichny, stepping forward, began in a gloomy voice:

"That's it! The masters send up whom they please, so what good is there in having the Commune take it up? The Commune has decreed that your son should go; but if you do not want him to go, you will ask the lady, and she may order my head to be shaven, although I am a singler with children. So here is the law," he said, sarcastically. And, waving his hand in disgust, he went back to his place.

Red-haired Román, whose son had been appointed, raised his head and said, "That's so, that's so!" and from anger sat down on the steps.

Those were not all the voices that spoke at the same time. Not only were those in the rear speaking of their affairs, but even the babblers did not forget their duty.

"Indeed, Orthodox people," said little Zhidkóv, repeating Dutlóv's words, "we must judge in Christian fashion. In Christian fashion, so to speak, my friends, we must judge."

"We must judge according to our consciences, my dear friend," said good-natured Khrapkóv, repeating Kopýlov's words, and pulling Dutlóv by his sheepskin coat. "It

was the will of the master, and not the decision of the Commune."

"That's right! That's what it is!" said others.

"What drunken fellow is barking there?" retorted Ryezún. "Have you ever given me to drink, or is your son, whom they pick up on the road, going to reproach me with drinking? Friends, let us pass a resolution. If you want to save the Dutlóvs, and will appoint a doubler, or even a singler, he will only make fun of us."

"Dutlóv has to go! What is the use in talking?"

"Of course! Triplers have to draw lots first," spoke several voices.

"Let us h ır what is the command of the lady! Egór Mikháylovich said that they wished to send up a manorial servant," som body remarked.

This statement for a moment held back the dispute, but soon it was renewed, and again passed over to personalities.

Ignát, of whom Ryezún had said that he had been picked up on the road, began to prove to Ryezún that he had stolen a file from some transient carpenters, and that while drunk he had almost beaten his wife to death.

Ryezún replied that he beat his wife whether he was sober or drunk, and that he did not beat her enough at that, which made everybody laugh. But he felt insulted about the file, and walked over nearer to Ignát, asking him:

"Who stole it?"

"You did," boldly replied sturdy Ignát, stepping still nearer toward him.

"Who stole it? Didn't you?" shouted Ryezún.

"No, you!" exclaimed Ignát.

After the file, a stolen horse was taken up, and a bag of oats, and a garden strip on the common pasture, and a dead body. And the two peasants said such a lot of terrible things to each other that if only one hundredth part

of what they accused each other had been true, they ought to have been both of them, according to the law, at least deported to Siberia.

Old Dutlóv in the meantime chose another mode of defence. He did not like his son's shouts. He stopped him, saying: "It is a sin to talk that way! Stop it, I say;" and he began himself to prove that triplers were not only those who had three sons together, but even those who had divided up the land, and he pointed to Stárostin.

Stárostin smiled slightly, cleared his throat, and, stroking his beard in the manner of a rich peasant, replied that the mistress's will would decide that. Apparently his son must have deserved it, and it was commanded to pass by him.

As regards the divided families, Gerásim, too, shattered Dutlóv's argument by saying that it should not have been permitted, as it had not been with the old master, to divide the property, that no one went for berries when the summer was gone, that now singlers would not be delivered up.

"Did they divide it up out of mischief? Why should they now be completely ruined?" were heard the voices of those who had divided up, and the babblers joined them.

"Buy a recruit, if you do not like it! You can do it!" Ryezún said to Dutlóv.

Dutlóv in desperation buttoned his caftan and stood back of other peasants.

"Evidently you have been counting up my money," he said, angrily. "Let us hear what Egór Mikháylovich is going to tell us from the lady!"

VI.

Egór Mikháylovich had actually just then left the house. One cap after another was raised above the head, and the nearer the clerk was coming, the more the bald crowns and foreheads, and the gray, half-gray, red, black, and blond heads were uncovered, and by degrees the voices died down until there was perfect silence. Egór Mikháylovich stood up on the porch and looked as though he wanted to speak. Egór Mikháylovich, in his long coat, with his hands uncomfortably stuck in his front pockets, in a factory-made cap poised in front, and standing with firmly planted, spreading feet on a commanding elevation, above the preponderatingly old and handsome bearded heads, which were raised and turned toward him, had an entirely different aspect from that which he had in presence of the lady. He was majestic.

"Here, good men, is the lady's decision: it does not please her to give up a manorial servant, and whomsoever you will yourselves appoint, will go. We need three this year. In reality, it is only two and a half, and one-half is for the next time. It is all the same: if not this time, it will have to be the next."

"Of course! That is so!" said several voices.

"According to my judgment," continued Egór Mikháylovich, "Khoryúshkin and Mityúkhin's Váska ought to go, — such is God's own will."

"Precisely! It's correct!" said some.

"The third is to be either Dutlóv, or one of the doublers. What do you say?"

"Dutlóv," said some, "the Dutlóvs are triplers."

And again the noise rose by degrees, and again mention was made of the pasture strip, and of some sacks stolen from the manor. Egór Mikháylovich had been superintending the estate for twenty years, and was a clever and experienced man. He stood still awhile, listened for about fifteen minutes, and suddenly commanded all to keep silent, while the Dutlóvs would cast lots which one of the three it was going to be. The lots were cut. Khrapkóv took one out from the cap which had been shaken up: it was Ilyá's lot. All were silent.

"Is it mine? Let me see," said Ilyá, in a faltering voice.

All were silent. Egór Mikháylovich ordered them to bring the recruit money on the following day, seven kopeks from each hearth, and, informing them that all was ended, dismissed the meeting. The crowd began to move, putting their caps on as they went around the corner and dinning with their tongues and boots. The clerk stood on the porch, looking at the retreating crowd. When the young Dutlóvs had gone around the corner, he called up old Dutlóv, who had himself stopped, and went with him to the office.

"I am sorry for you, old man," said Egór Mikháylovich, sitting down in an armchair at the table. "It is your turn. Are you going to buy off your nephew, or not?"

The old man, without making any reply, looked significantly at Egór Mikháylovich.

"There is no getting out of it," Egór Mikháylovich replied to his glance.

"I should like to buy him off, Egór Mikháylovich, but I have no money. I have lost two horses this summer. I married off my nephew. Evidently this is our fate for living an honest life. It is easy enough for him to talk." (He was thinking of Ryezún.)

Egór Mikháylovich rubbed his face with his hand, and

yawned. He was obviously getting tired of the matter, and it was time for tea.

"Old man, don't be sinning!" he said. "Take a good look under your floor, and maybe you will find four hundred old roubles there. I will buy you a first-class volunteer. Only the other day a fellow came to see me about it."

"In the Government?" asked Dutlóv, meaning the city by that appellation.

"Well, will you buy him off?"

"I should like to, I swear by God, but—"

Egór Mikháylovich sternly interrupted him:

"Listen to me, old man! See to it that Ilyá does nothing to himself. Whenever I send for him, whether it be this evening, or to-morrow, he must be ready. You will take him there, and you will be responsible for him. If, God forfend, something should happen to him, I will get your eldest son's head shaved. You hear?"

"It is really wrong to treat doublers that way, Egór Mikháylovich," he said, after a moment's silence. "My brother died a soldier, and now they take my son: why must I suffer so?" he said, almost weeping, and ready to fall down before his feet.

"Go now, go," said Egór Mikháylovich. "I can't help it, such is the law. Watch Ilyá, for you are responsible for him."

Dutlóv went home, thoughtfully striking the linden-stick on the tufts of the road.

VII.

EARLY on the following morning there stood in front of the servants' wing a travelling-cart, in which the clerk travelled, to which was hitched a broad-boned bay horse, for some unknown reason called Drum. Anyútka, Polikúshka's eldest daughter, stood barefoot, in spite of the rain with hail and with a cold wind, before the head of the horse, with one hand holding the bridle at a distance, with evident fear, and with the other holding down over her head a yellow and green jacket which in the family fulfilled the duty of a coverlet, fur coat, cap, rug, coat for Polikúshka, and many more duties.

There was a stir in the "corner." It was still dark; the morning twilight of a rainy day with difficulty penetrated the window which was here and there pasted up with paper. Akulína, who for a time neglected the cooking in the oven, and the children, of whom the younger ones had not yet wakened, and were freezing, because their coverlet had been taken away to be used as wearing apparel, while in its place had been put their mother's kerchief, — Akulína was busy seeing off her husband.

The shirt was clean. The boots, which, as they say, begged for porridge, caused her especial worry. In the first place, she took off her own thick, woollen stockings, the only ones which she had, and gave them to her husband; in the second, from the saddle-cloth, which had been lying loose in the stable, and which Polikúshka had brought home two days before, she had managed to make inner soles in such a way as to stop up the gaps and pre-

serve his feet against dampness. Polikúshka himself, sitting with his feet on the bed, was busy turning his belt in such a way as to make it look different from a dirty rope. The cross little lisping girl, who, with the fur coat above her head, was still stumbling over it, had been despatched to Nikíta to ask for a cap.

The stir was increased by the manorial servants, who came to ask Polikúshka to buy things for them in town, — for this one pins, for that one tea, for another sweet-oil, for still another tobacco, and sugar for the joiner's wife, who had by that time got the samovár ready and, to appease Polikúshka, had brought him a pitcher of what she called tea.

Although Nikíta refused to give his cap, and it became necessary to fix his own, that is, push back the protruding cotton batting and sew up the hole with a veterinary needle; although at first he could not get on the boots with the saddle-cloth soles; although Anyútka was chilled and let Drum out of her hand, and Máshka in the fur coat had to go in her place, and then Máshka had to take off the fur coat, and Akulína herself had to go to hold Drum, — it all ended by Polikúshka's putting on all the apparel of the family, leaving behind nothing but the jacket and slippers. After he was all dressed up, he seated himself in the cart, wrapped the coat about him, fixed the hay, once more wrapped himself, separated the lines, wrapped himself more tightly, just as dignified people do, and started.

His boy, Míshka, who had run out on the porch, asked for a ride. Lisping Máshka, too, began to ask for a ride, saying that she was not "fleezing without the coat," and Polikúshka checked in Drum and smiled his weak smile, while Akulína put the children into the cart and, bending over to him, told him in a whisper that he must not forget his oath to drink nothing on his way. Polikúshka took the children as far as the smithy, put them down, again

wrapped himself, again adjusted his cap, and drove off alone in a slow, dignified trot, his cheeks shaking at every jolt, and his feet striking the body of the cart.

Máshka and Míshka with such rapidity and with such shrieks ran barefoot to the house over the slippery hill, that a dog, which had found its way from the village to the yard of the manor, looked at them and, suddenly taking its tail between its legs, started home with loud barking, whereat the shrieks of Polikúshka's heirs were increased tenfold.

The weather was miserable: the wind cut in the face, and something which was not snow, nor rain, nor hail now and then struck Polikúshka's face and bare hands, which he hid with the cold lines under the sleeves of his camel-hair coat, and struck the leather covering of the arch, and Drum's old head, which dropped its ears and closed its eyes.

Then it suddenly stopped, and it grew clearer; one could plainly see the bluish snow clouds, and the sun began to peep through, but without determination and without cheerfulness, just like the smile of Polikúshka himself. Notwithstanding all that, Polikúshka was merged in agreeable thoughts. He, whom they had intended to deport, who had been threatened with military service, whom only a lazy person did not scold and beat, who was always pushed into the worst places, — he now was travelling to receive a "sum" of money, and a big sum at that, and the mistress trusted him, and he was travelling in the clerk's cart with Drum, the lady's driving-horse, like an innkeeper, with leather straps and reins. Polikúshka sat up straighter, fixed the batting in his cap, and again wrapped himself in his coat.

However, if Polikúshka thought that he exactly resembled a rich innkeeper, he was mistaken. Of course, we all know that merchants from ten thousand on travel in carts with leather trappings; still it is a different

matter. Such a man has a beard, wears a blue or black caftan, drives a well-fed horse, and sits in a box: all you have to do is to see whether the horse is well fed, whether he is well fed, how he sits, how the horse is harnessed, what tires there are on the wheels, how he himself is girded, and you immediately can tell whether the peasant sells by the thousand roubles, or by the hundred. If any experienced man had looked closely at Polikúshka, at his hands, his face, his young beard, his belt, at the hay carelessly thrown into the box, at lean Drum, at the worn tires, he would have told at once that a mere peasant was travelling there, and not a merchant, not a wholesale dealer, nor an innkeeper, nor a man dealing by the thousand roubles, nor by the hundred, nor even by the ten roubles.

Polikúshka did not think so, and he was mistaken, agreeably mistaken. He would bring back fifteen hundred in the bosom of his coat. If he will have a mind to, he will turn his horse to Odessa instead of home, and will travel whither God will take him. Still, he will not do it, but will faithfully bring the money back to the mistress and will tell her that he had been entrusted with greater sums than that.

Upon coming abreast with a tavern, Drum began to pull at the left line, to slow down, and to turn in; but Polikúshka, despite the fact that he had money with him, given him for the purchase of various things, gave Drum the whip and drove on. The same he did at the next tavern. At noon he got off his cart and, opening the gate of the merchant's house, where the people of his mistress used to stop, led the horse in, unhitched it, put up the horse and gave it hay, dined with the merchant's labourers, at which occasion he did not fail to tell them on what important errand he had come, and went, with the letter in his cap, to the gardener. The gardener, who knew Polikúshka, read the letter, and with obvious suspicion

asked him whether it was so that he had been ordered to bring the money back. Polikúshka wanted to appear offended, but he could not; he only smiled his smile. The gardener read the letter once more and gave him the money.

Having received the money, Polikúshka put it in the bosom of his coat and went to his lodging. Neither the dram-shops nor the tavern tempted him. He experienced a pleasurable irritation in his whole being, and he stopped more than once at the shops with tempting wares, boots, coats, caps, chintz goods, and victuals. After standing there a little while, he went away with the pleasant sensation: "I can buy it all, but I won't."

He went to the market and bought everything he had been commissioned to buy, and haggled for a tanned fur coat, for which twenty-five roubles was asked. The salesman, looking at Polikúshka, for some reason doubted his ability to buy it; but Polikúshka pointed to his bosom, saying that he could buy out his whole shop, if he wanted to, and asked to be allowed to try on the fur coat. He crumpled the fur, beat it, blew into it, even became permeated by its smell, and finally took it off with a sigh.

"The price does not suit me. If you would let it go for fifteen," he said.

The merchant angrily threw the coat across the table, and Polikúshka went out, and in a happy mood returned to his lodging. After having eaten his supper, and having watered Drum and given him oats, he climbed on the oven, took out the envelope, examined it for a long time, and asked an innkeeper who could read, to tell the address for him; it bore the inscription, "With the enclosure of one thousand six hundred and seventeen roubles in assignats." The envelope was made of common paper, and the seals were of brown sealing-wax with the representation of an anchor: there was one large one in the middle and four small ones in the corners; the sides had

some drops of sealing-wax upon them. Polikúshka examined all this and studied it, and even fingered the sharp edges of the assignats.

He experienced a childish joy, knowing that such a sum was in his hands. He stuck the envelope into the hole of the cap, put the cap under his head, and lay down to sleep; but even in the night he awoke several times and fingered the envelope. Every time he found the envelope in its place, he experienced the happy sensation that he, Polikúshka, the disgraced and offended man, was carrying such a sum, and that he would faithfully deliver it, even more faithfully than the clerk would do it.

VIII.

About midnight the merchant's workmen and Polikúshka were wakened by knocks at the gate and the calls of peasants. Those were the recruits who were being brought up from Pokróvskoe. There were ten of them: Khoryúshkin, Mityúshkin, and Ilyá (Dutlóv's nephew), two substitutes, the elder, old Dutlóv, and the drivers. A night-lamp was burning in the kitchen, and the cook was sleeping on a bench under the images. She jumped up and began to light a candle. Polikúshka, too, awoke, and, bending down from the oven, began to look at the peasants as they were coming in. They all entered, crossed themselves, and sat down on the benches. They were all very calm, so that it was difficult to tell who were the recruits and who their guards. They gave their greetings, talked awhile, and asked for something to eat. It is true, some of them were taciturn and sad; but others again were jolly, having apparently had something to drink. Among these was Ilyá, who had never drunk before.

"Well, boys, shall we eat our supper or go to sleep?" asked the elder.

"Eat supper," replied Ilyá, throwing open his fur coat and seating himself on a bench. "Send for brandy!"

"No brandy now," the elder said, in passing, and again turning to the others. "Take a bite of bread, boys! What is the use of waking the people?"

"Give me some brandy," repeated Ilyá, without looking at any one, and in a voice which indicated that he would not stop so soon.

The peasants obeyed the elder's advice, fetched some bread from their carts, ate it, asked for a little kvas, and lay down, some of them on the floor, others on the oven.

Ilyá now and then kept repeating: "Let me have some brandy, I say. Let me have it!" Suddenly he espied Polikúshka: "Polikúshka, Polikúshka! Are you here, dear friend? I am going to be a soldier! They are taking me away from my mother and from my wife — How she cried! They have sent me up! Treat me to brandy!"

"I have no money," replied Polikúshka. "With God's aid you may be rejected yet," Polikúshka added, to console him.

"No, my friend, I am as pure as a birch; I have no diseases. What fault can I have? What better soldiers does the Tsar want?"

Polikúshka began to tell a story of how a peasant gave the doctor a blue assignat, and how he was freed by that.

Ilyá moved up to the oven, and they talked more freely.

"No, Polikúshka, now it is all ended, and I myself do not want to remain. Uncle has sold me. He could buy me off, but he is sorry for his son, and for the money, too They are sending me up, — now I do not want to myself." (He spoke softly, confidentially, under the influence of calm grief.) "The only thing is, I am sorry for mother: the dear one felt so bad about it! And I am sorry for my wife: they have ruined the woman just for nothing; now she will suffer; a soldier's widow, that's all she will be. It would have been better not to have married. Why did they get me married? They will be here tomorrow."

"Why have they brought you so early?" asked Polikúshka. "We heard nothing about it, and there you suddenly are — "

"Evidently they are afraid I might do something to

myself," replied Ilyá, smiling. "They need not fear, I will do nothing. I won't be lost as a soldier, either, only I am sorry for my mother. Why did they get me married?" he said, softly and sadly.

The door opened and slammed violently, and in came old Dutlóv, shaking off his cap, in his bast shoes, which were so large that they looked like boats.

"Afanási," he said, making the sign of the cross and turning to the innkeeper, "haven't you a lantern so I can go out and give the horses some oats?"

Dutlóv did not look at Ilyá, and calmly began to light a tallow dip. His mittens and whip were stuck in his belt, and his camel coat was properly girded, as though he had been travelling with a caravan, so habitually simple, peaceful, occupied with his farm task, did his industrious face look.

When Ilyá saw his uncle, he grew silent, again gloomily directed his eyes to something upon the bench, and, turning to the elder, said:

"Give me some brandy, Ermíla. I want some liquor to drink."

His voice was angry and gloomy.

"This is no time for liquor," replied the elder, sipping from a cup. "You see that the people have had their supper and are now lying down; don't make such a fuss about it!"

The word "fuss" led him to the idea of becoming really unruly.

"Elder, I will cause some misfortune if you do not give me some brandy."

"Can't you bring him to his senses?" the elder turned to Dutlóv, who had lighted the lantern, but had stopped to listen to what would happen next, looking compassionately awry at his nephew, as though surprised to see him act so childishly.

Ilyá cast down his eyes and repeated:

"Let me have brandy, or I will do something bad."

"Stop, Ilyá!" the elder said, meekly. "Really, stop it! It will be better if you do."

But before he had fully finished his words, Ilyá jumped up, smashed a window-pane with his fist, and called out, at the top of his voice:

"You would not listen to me, so here you have it!" and he rushed up to the other window to smash that one too.

Polikúshka, in the twinkling of an eye, rolled over twice and concealed himself in the corner of the oven, frightening all the cockroaches. The elder threw down his spoon and ran up to Ilyá. Dutlóv leisurely put down the lantern, ungirt himself, clicking his tongue all the while, shook his head, and went up to Ilyá, who was struggling with the elder and the innkeeper, who did not let him come up to the window. They caught his hands and seemed to be holding them firmly; but the moment Ilyá saw his uncle with the belt, his strength was increased tenfold; he tore himself away, and, rolling his eyes, advanced toward Dutlóv with clenched fists.

"I will kill you! Don't come up, you barbarian! You have ruined me, you, with your robber sons, have ruined me! What did you get me married for? Don't come up, or I'll kill you!"

Ilyá was terrible. His face was crimson; his eyes could not find a resting-place; his whole body, his youthful body, trembled as in an ague. He looked as though he wanted, and were able, to kill all three men who were advancing toward him.

"You are drinking your brother's blood, you blood-sucker!"

Something flashed in Dutlóv's eternally calm face. He made a step forward.

"You won't do it in kindness," he suddenly exclaimed. In an outburst of energy he with a rapid motion seized

his nephew, rolled down on the floor with him, and, with the aid of the elder, began to tie his arms. They struggled for about five minutes; finally Dutlóv got up with the help of the other peasants, pulling Ilyá's hand away from his fur coat, to which he was clinging; after he was up he lifted Ilyá with his arms tied behind and placed him in a sitting posture in the corner, back of the bench.

"I told you it would be worse," he said, out of breath from the struggle and adjusting his shirt belt. "What is the use of sinning? We shall all die. Put a coat back of his head," he added, turning to the innkeeper, "or else the blood will rush to his head," and he himself took the lantern, girded himself with a cord, and went out to the horses.

Ilyá, with dishevelled hair, pale face, and crumpled shirt, surveyed the room, as though trying to recall where he was. The innkeeper picked up the glass shivers and stuck a short coat into the window to keep out the wind. The elder again sat down to his cup.

"Oh, Ilyá, Ilyá! I am sorry for you, truly I am! But what is to be done? Khoryúshkin is married, too; evidently such is fate."

"I am perishing through the fault of that rascal of an uncle," Ilyá exclaimed, with cold malice. "He is sorry for his own son — Mother said that the clerk told him to buy me off. He does not want to; he says he can't do it. Brother and I have brought quite a lot to his house! — He is a scoundrel!"

Dutlóv entered the room, prayed toward the images, took off his wraps, and sat down near the elder. The cook brought him some more kvas and a spoon. Ilyá grew silent and, closing his eyes, leaned against the coat. The elder pointed silently at him and shook his head. Dutlóv waved his hand.

"Of course I am sorry for him. He is my own brother's child. But, though I pity him, they have made me

out a scoundrel to him. His wife — she is cunning, even though she is young — put it into his head that we had enough money to buy a recruit with. So he reproaches me with it. I pity the lad very much!"

"He is a nice fellow!" said the elder.

"I have no power over him. To-morrow I shall send Ignát, and his wife, too, wanted to come."

"Send him, that will be all right," said the elder. He got up and climbed upon the oven. "What is money? Money is dust."

"If one had money, who would think of stinting it?" said one of the merchant's workmen, raising his head.

"Oh, the money, the money! Much sin comes from it," remarked Dutlóv. "There is nothing in the world from which there comes so much sin as from money, and it says so in the Gospel."

"So it says," repeated the innkeeper. "A man once told me that there was a man who had saved up a great deal of money; he did not want to leave any after him, because he loved his money so, and took it with him in his grave. As he was dying he told them to put his cushion in the coffin with him. It did not occur to them what it was, and so they did as he asked them to. Later the sons began to look for the money, but there was none. It occurred to one son that, no doubt, the money was in that cushion. The case was taken to the Tsar, and he permitted them to dig up the grave. Well, what do you think? They dug it up, but there was nothing in the cushion, and the coffin was full of snakes; so they filled up the grave again. That's what money does!"

"Of course, it leads to much sin," said Dutlóv, and he got up, and began to pray.

After his prayer he looked at his nephew: he was asleep. Dutlóv walked over to him, took off his belt, and himself lay down. Another peasant went to the horses to sleep.

IX.

As soon as everything quieted down, Polikúshka, like a guilty person, softly climbed down and began to dress himself. For some reason he felt uncomfortable sleeping in the same room with the recruits. The cocks were now crowing more frequently to each other. Drum had eaten up all his oats and was begging to be taken to the trough. Polikúshka harnessed him and took him out past the peasant carts. The cap with its contents was all right, and the wheels of the cart again rumbled over the frozen road to Pokróvskoe.

Polikúshka felt more at ease only when he left the town far behind. Before that it seemed to him that they would be in pursuit of him at any moment, that they would stop him and tie up his arms instead of Ilyá's, and that on the following day they would enlist him. The cold and terror made a chill creep up his spine, and he kept pulling Drum's reins. The first men he met were a pope in a tall winter cap and a crippled labourer. Polikúshka felt even worse than before. At a distance from the town the terror passed away by degrees. Drum was going at a pace; the road could be seen ahead.

Polikúshka took off his cap and felt for the money. "Had I not better put it in my bosom?" he thought. "I shall have to ungird myself. As soon as I get up the hill, I will get off the cart and fix myself. My cap is sewn up on top, and it can't come out below from the lining. I sha'n't take off my cap before I get home."

Having reached the foot of the hill, Drum of his own

free will leaped up the hill, and Polikúshka, who wanted, like Drum, to get home as soon as possible, did not hold him back. Everything was in order, at least he thought so, and he abandoned himself to dreaming of the mistress's gratefulness, of the five roubles which she would give him, and of the joy of his family. He took down his cap, fingered the envelope once more, pulled his cap deeper down over his head, and smiled. The plush on the cap was rotten, and, for the very reason that Akulína had sewn up the torn corner on the previous day, it fell to pieces at the other end, and that very motion, with which Polikúshka, in taking off the cap, was trying in the dark to push the envelope with the money farther into the lining, — that very motion ripped the cap and made the envelope stick out with one corner from the plush.

It was beginning to grow lighter, and Polikúshka, who had not slept all night, dozed off. In pulling down his cap, the letter protruded even more. In his sleep Polikúshka began to strike his head against the rounds of the cart. He awoke near the house. His first motion was to clasp his cap; it was tight on his head, and he did not take it off, being convinced that the envelope was in it. He touched Drum with his whip, again assumed the aspect of an innkeeper, and, casting a dignified look about him, began to jolt on his way up to the house.

There was the kitchen, there the "wing;" there the joiner's wife was carrying rolls of linen; there was the office, and there the manor, in which Polikúshka would soon show that he was a trustworthy and honest man, that "it is easy enough to slander any man," and the lady would say: "Thank you, Polikúshka! Here are for you three," and maybe five, and maybe ten roubles, and would order them to bring him a glass of tea, and maybe a dram of brandy. It would not be bad in this cold. "For the ten roubles we will celebrate the holi-

days, and buy boots, and will at last pay Nikíta the four roubles and a half, for he has been dunning me so much — "

When within about one hundred paces from the house, Polikúshka straightened himself up, adjusted his belt and collar, took off his cap, smoothed his hair, and, leisurely stuck his hand into the lining. The hand stirred about in the lining, faster, faster; he stuck in the other hand; his face grew paler, paler; one hand came entirely through — Polikúshka jumped on his knees, stopped the horse, and began to examine the cart, the hay, the purchases, to feel in his bosom and trousers: the money was not anywhere.

"O Lord! What is that? What will that be?" he roared, clasping his head.

But, recalling that he might be seen, he turned Drum back, slammed his cap down on his head, and drove surprised and dissatisfied Drum back again along the road.

"I can't bear being driven by Polikúshka," was what, no doubt, Drum thought. "Once in my lifetime has he given me to eat and drink in season, and that, too, only in order to deceive me. How hard I tried, running home! I am tired, and no sooner do I smell our hay than he drives me back again."

"Get up, devil's jade!" Polikúshka cried through tears, rising in his cart, jerking the reins over Drum's mouth, and striking him with the whip.

X.

ALL that day nobody saw Polikúshka at Pokróvskoe. The lady asked for him several times after dinner, and Aksyútka kept flying to Akulína; but Akulína said that he had not yet arrived, that evidently the merchant had detained him, or that something might have happened to the horse.

"Maybe the horse is lame?" she said. "Last time Maksím drove the whole day, and he himself had to walk all the way."

Aksyútka again adjusted her pendulums on the way toward the house, and Akulína endeavoured to find explanations for the detention of her husband and tried to calm herself, — but in vain! Her heart felt heavy, and she could not well perform any work for the morrow, which was a holiday. She was the more vexed because the joiner's wife assured her that she had herself seen a man, just like Polikúshka, come up as far as the avenue and turn back again.

The children, too, were in impatience and disquietude waiting for their father, but for different causes. Anyútka and Máshka were left without the fur coat and camel-hair coat, which made it possible for them, even though by turns, to go out into the street, and so they were compelled to make circles about the house, in nothing but their dresses, with increased rapidity, by which they put to no small amount of discomfort the inmates of the "wing," both those who entered it and who came out of it. Once Máshka ran into the legs of the joiner's

wife, who was carrying water, and, although she bawled from pain, having struck against the woman's knee, she had her top-lock pulled, which made her howl so much the louder. When she did not run up against anybody, she flew in through the door and over a vat climbed upon the oven.

The mistress and Akulína were the only ones who were sincerely concerned about Polikúshka; the children were only concerned about that which he wore. Egór Mikháylovich, while reporting to his mistress, in response to her question, "Has Polikúshka not yet returned, and where can he be?" only smiled and answered, "I can't tell," and was apparently satisfied because his supposition had come true. "He ought to be back by noon," he said, significantly.

All that day nobody knew anything about Polikúshka; only later they found out that neighbouring peasants had seen him running up and down the road without a cap, and asking everybody whether they had not found a letter. Another man had seen him sleeping by the roadside, near the horse and cart, which were turned in. "I thought," said that man, "that he was drunk, and that the horse, from the way his sides were sunken, had not been fed or watered for two days."

Akulína did not sleep all night: she was listening all the time, but Polikúshka did not come. If she had been alone, and had had a man cook and a servant-girl, she would have been unhappier still; but the moment the third cockcrow was heard and the joiner's wife got up, Akulína had to get up herself and attend to the oven.

It was a holiday: before dawn the loaves had to be taken out; she had to make kvas, bake flat-cakes, milk the cow, iron shirts and dresses, wash the children, bring water, and keep her neighbour from occupying the whole oven. Akulína took up her work, listening all the time.

It was already daylight; the church bells had been rung; the children were dressed, and Polikúshka was still

away. There had been a light frost the evening before; the fields, the road, and the roofs were unevenly covered with snow; that day, as though for the holiday, was bright, sunshiny, and frosty, so that one could hear and see a long distance.

But Akulína, who was standing at the oven and had leaned with her head over the orifice, was so busy with the baking of the flat-cakes that she did not hear Polikúshka driving up, and only by her children's cries did she know that her husband had arrived.

Anyútka, being the eldest, had herself greased her hair and dressed herself. She wore a new, though crumpled, pink chintz dress, a present from the mistress, which stuck out like the body of a cart and was an object of envy to the neighbours; her hair glistened, — she had used up half a tallow dip on it; her shoes were not new, but of fine leather. Máshka still wore the jacket and was dirty, and Anyútka did not let her come close to her, for fear of getting soiled.

Máshka was in the yard when her father drove up with the mat-bag. "Father has come," she screeched, and, bolting past Anyútka through the door, soiled her sister's dress. Anyútka, no longer afraid of getting soiled, gave Máshka a thrashing on the spot, while Akulína could not tear herself away from her work. She only shouted to her children: "Look out there! I'll spank every one of you!" and looked back at the door. Polikúshka, with the bag in his hand, stepped into the vestibule and immediately made for his corner. Akulína thought that he was pale and that on his face there was something intermediate between a tearful expression and a smile; but she had no time to make it out.

"Well, Polikúshka, is everything all right?" she asked him, standing at the oven.

Polikúshka muttered something, but she did not understand him.

"Well," she cried, "have you seen the lady yet?"

Polikúshka sat on the bed in his corner, looking wildly about him and smiling his guilty and deeply miserable smile. He for a long time made no reply.

"Polikúshka, why are you so long in answering?" was heard Akulína's voice.

"Akulína, I have returned the money to the lady. She thanked me so much for it!" he suddenly said, and began to look around more restlessly, and to smile. Two objects in particular arrested his restless, feverishly open eyes: the ropes that were attached to the cradle, and the baby. He walked over to the cradle and with his thin fingers began hurriedly to untie a knot in the rope. Then his eyes dwelt on the baby; but just then Akulína, with the flat-cakes on a board, entered the corner. Polikúshka rapidly concealed the rope in the bosom of his coat and sat down on the bed.

"What is the matter with you, Polikúshka? You act as though beside yourself," said Akulína.

"I have not slept any," he replied.

Suddenly something flashed past the window, and in a twinkle Aksyútka, the girl from up there, flew in like an arrow.

"The lady has commanded Polikéy Ilích to come to her this very minute," she said. "This very minute, Avdótya Nikoláevna has commanded — this minute."

Polikúshka looked at Akulína and at the girl.

"Directly! What more does she want?" he said, in such a simple way that Akulína's fears were allayed. "Maybe she wants to reward me! Tell her I will be there at once."

He rose and went out. Akulína took a trough, put it on a bench, poured water into it from some pails that were standing at the door and from the hot kettle in the oven, rolled up her sleeves, and tried the water.

"Come, Máshka, I'll wash you."

The angry, lisping girl bawled out loud.

"Come, you brat, I want to put a new shirt on you. Stop your bawling! Come, I have to wash your sister yet."

In the meantime Polikúskha stepped out; he did not follow the girl, but went to another place. In the vestibule there was a straight staircase near the wall, which led to the loft. Upon coming out into the vestibule, Polikúshka looked around him; seeing nobody there, he bent down and, almost on a run, nimbly and swiftly climbed the staircase.

"What can be the cause of Polikúshka's not coming?" the lady said, impatiently, turning to Dunyásha, who was scratching the head for her. "Where is Polikúshka? Why is he not coming?"

Aksyútka again flew into the yard, and again darted into the vestibule and ordered Polikúshka to come to the lady.

"He went long ago," replied Akulína, who, having washed Máshka, had just put her suckling babe into the trough, wetting his scanty hair, in spite of his shrieks. The boy cried, frowned, and tried to catch something with his impotent little hands. Akulína with one of her big hands supported his plump, dimpled, soft back, and with the other washed him.

"See whether he has not fallen asleep somewhere," she said, looking restlessly around.

Just then the joiner's wife, unkempt, with bared breast, holding up her skirts, was going up to the loft to fetch the clothes that were drying there. Suddenly a shriek of terror was heard in the loft, and the joiner's wife, like one demented, with closed eyes, on her hands and feet, more slid down on her back, than ran down the staircase.

"Polikúshka!" she cried.

Akulína dropped her babe.

"He has hung himself!" roared the joiner's wife.

Akulína ran out into the vestibule, not noticing that the child rolled backward, like a ball of twine, and, with his feet in the air, fell with his head into the water.

"He is hanging — on a rafter," shouted the joiner's wife, but, upon seeing Akulína, she stopped.

Akulína ran to the stairs; before she could be held back, she rushed up and, with a terrible cry, fell, like a dead body, on the stairs, and would have been killed if the people who had assembled from all sides had not caught her.

XI.

For a few moments nothing could be made out in the universal turmoil. There were no end of people there; all cried, all spoke, and the children and old women wept. Akulína lay unconscious. Finally the men, the joiner and the clerk, who had run up to the place, went up-stairs, and the joiner's wife told for the twentieth time: "I was not thinking of anything as I went for the pelerines; suddenly I looked like this: I saw a man; again I looked: a cap, turned inside out, was lying near by. His legs were dangling. A chill ran up my spine. It is no small matter to see a man hanging, and it was I who saw him. I do not remember myself how I got down. God saved me by a miracle. Truly, the Lord has shown me His mercy. It is no small matter, considering the height and the dizziness! I should have been killed."

The people who had gone up-stairs told the same. Polikúshka was hanging down from a rafter, in nothing but his trousers and shirt, strangled by the rope which he had taken off the cradle. His cap, turned inside out, lay near him. The camel-hair coat and the fur coat lay folded up near by. His feet reached to the floor, and there were no signs of life in him. Akulína regained her senses and again made for the staircase, but people did not let her go up.

"Mother, Sémka has dlowned himself," suddenly screeched the lisping girl in the corner. Akulína again plunged forward and ran into the corner. The child lay motionless on his back in the trough, and his little legs did not stir. Akulína grabbed him, but the child did not

breathe nor move. Akulína threw him on the bed, leaned on her arms, and burst forth into such a loud, sonorous and terrible laugh, that Máshka, who at first had started laughing herself, closed her ears and, weeping, ran out into the vestibule. The people, sobbing and crying, crowded into the "corner." The child was taken out and rubbed, but all in vain. Akulína tossed on the bed and roared so loud that all who heard that laughter felt terribly.

Only now, as one saw such a variegated crowd of men and women, of old men and children, crowding in the vestibule, could one get an idea what a mass of people and what kind of people were living in the "wing" of the manor. All were bustling; all were talking; many were weeping, and nobody was doing anything.

The joiner's wife still found some people who had not heard her story, and again told of how her tender feelings had been startled by the unexpected sight, and how God had saved her from falling down-stairs. The old butler, in a woman's jacket, told of how a woman had been drowned in the pond in the lifetime of the late master.

The clerk sent messengers to the commissary and the priest and appointed a guard. The girl from up there, Aksyútka, stood looking with bulging eyes through the hole in the loft, and, although she could see nothing, was unable to tear herself away in order to go to the lady. Agáfya Mikháylovna, the old lady's former chambermaid, asked for tea to quiet her nerves with, and was weeping. Grandmother Anna with her experienced, plump hands, saturated with sweet oil, put the body of the child on the table.

The women stood about Akulína and looked silently at her. The children, pressing themselves into the corners, kept looking at their mother and screaming, then grew silent, then again looked at her, and pressed themselves farther into the corners.

Boys and men were gathered near the porch; they were

looking with frightened faces through the doors and windows, seeing nothing and understanding nothing, and asking each other what was up. One said that the joiner had chopped off his wife's foot with an axe. Another said that the washerwoman had brought triplets into the world. A third told them that the cook's cat had gone mad and had bitten a number of people. But the truth began to spread by degrees, and finally reached the lady's ears. It seems they had not time to prepare her for it: rude Egór simply reported the fact to her, by which he so unnerved her that she could not calm herself for a long time afterward.

The crowd was beginning to quiet down; the joiner's wife got the samovár ready and brewed some tea, whereat the strangers who had received no invitation regarded it as improper to stay any longer. The boys were beginning to fight at the porch; all knew what the matter was and, crossing themselves, were beginning to disperse, when suddenly somebody called out, "The lady! The lady!" and all again assembled and crowded together, in order to make a gangway for her; they wanted all of them to see what she was going to do.

The lady was pale and in tears; she crossed the threshold into the vestibule, into Akulína's corner. Dozens of heads were crowded together and looking through the door. One pregnant woman was squeezed so badly that she screamed; but, immediately taking advantage of this circumstance, she pushed herself forward. Indeed, it was worth while seeing the lady in Akulína's "corner"! This was for the manorial servants the same as red fires at the end of a show. It is great when it comes to burning red fires, and so it was great to see the lady in silk and laces go into Akulína's corner. The lady walked up to Akulína and took her hand; but Akulína drew it back. The old manorial servants shook their heads in disapproval.

"Akulína," said the lady, "you have children, so take care of yourself."

Akulína burst out laughing, and got up.

"All my children are like silver, like silver — I have no paper," she muttered, in rapid speech. "I told Polikúshka not to take any paper, now they have smeared you, they have smeared you with tar, with tar and soap, lady. No matter how bad the scars are, they will come off." And she burst forth into a more terrible laugh.

The lady turned around and asked them to fetch the surgeon's assistant and a mustard poultice. "Let me have some cold water!" and she went to look for it herself; but, upon seeing the dead child, before which stood Grandmother Anna, the lady turned aside, and all saw her cover her face with her handkerchief and weep. Grandmother Anna (What a pity the lady did not see it! She would have appreciated it, for it was done for her sake) covered the baby with a piece of linen, straightened out his little hands with her plump, nimble hand, and shook her head so, and stretched her lips, and blinked significantly, and sighed so that one could see what a good heart she had. But the lady did not see it, and could not see it. She sobbed; she had a fit of hysterics and had to be helped out into the vestibule and taken home.

"That's all there was of her," thought some, and began to disperse. Akulína kept laughing and talking nonsense. She was taken to another room: they bled her and put mustard poultices on her and ice on her head; but she understood as little what was going on, and did not weep, but laughed and said and did such things that the good people who were attending her could not keep from laughing themselves.

XII.

It was not a merry holiday in the Pokróvskoe manor. Although it was a beautiful day, the people did not come out for a stroll; the girls did not assemble in order to sing songs; the factory lads, who had come from town, did not play the accordion, or the balaláyka, and did not play with the girls. All were sitting in their corners, and if they were talking, they spoke as softly as though the evil one were present and could hear them.

In the daytime it was still tolerable; but in the evening, as it grew dark, the dogs began to whine, and, as though portending misfortune, a wind rose and blew into the chimneys, and such a terror fell upon the inhabitants of the manor yard that whoever had candles lighted them before the images; who had a "corner" to himself went to ask permission to stay overnight with his neighbours, where there were many people; and who had to go to the stalls, did not go, and without pity left the cattle without feed for that night. All the holy water, which the people kept in bladders, was used up that night. Many even heard somebody walking on the lofts with heavy tread, and the blacksmith saw a dragon fly straight upon the loft.

In Polikúshka's corner there was no one; the children and the demented woman were transferred elsewhere. There lay only the body of the child, and two old women and a pilgrim were there; the pilgrim in her zeal read the psalter, not over the babe, but just on the occasion of the whole calamity. The mistress had commanded it.

These old women and the pilgrim themselves heard, at the end of every division in the psalter, the rafter creaking up-stairs and somebody groaning. Then they said, "Let God rise," and everything grew quiet again.

The joiner's wife called a relative of hers to stay with her that night, but she did not go to sleep and drank up all the supply of tea which she had laid in for a week. They, too, heard the rafters creak up-stairs and what seemed to be bags falling down. The peasants on guard gave courage to the manorial servants, or else they would have died from fear that night. The peasants lay in the vestibule on hay, and later affirmed that they, too, had heard wonderful things in the loft, although they had been doing nothing that night but calmly discussing the conscription, munching bread, scratching themselves, and, above all, filling the vestibule with their peculiar peasant odour, so that the joiner's wife, passing by them, spit out and berated them for being louts.

However it be, the dead man was hanging all the time in the loft, and it seemed as though the evil spirit that night had veiled the "wing" with his immense pinion, displaying his power and more than ever coming near to those people. At least all of them felt so. I do not know whether that fear was just. I even think that it was not at all. I think that if a bold fellow had taken a candle or lantern that night and, protecting himself or even not protecting himself with the sign of the cross, had walked up to the loft, and, with the candle-light slowly dispelling the terror of the night in front of him and lighting up the rafters, the sand, the chimney with its covering of spider-webs, and the pelerines, which the joiner's wife had forgotten there, — if he had made his way up to Polikúshka, and if, not submitting to the feeling of terror, he had raised the lantern to the level of his face, he would have seen the familiar, haggard body, with its legs standing on the floor (the rope had slipped),

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lifelessly bent sidewise, with the collar of the shirt, underneath which the cross could not be seen, unbuttoned, and his head drooping on his breast, and his good face with open, dead eyes, and his meek, guilty smile, and solemn calm and quiet over everything. Really, the joiner's wife, who, pressing into the corner of her bed, with dishevelled hair and frightened eyes was telling that she had heard bags fall, was by far more terrible than Polikúshka, although he had taken off his cross and had put it on the rafter.

"Up there," that is, in the manor, there reigned the same terror as in the "wing." The lady's room smelled of eau de Cologne and medicine. Dunyásha was heating yellow wax for a plaster. What the plaster was for I do not know; but I do know that the plaster was made every time the lady was ill. Just now she was unnerved to the point of illness. To keep up Dunyásha's courage, her aunt had come to stay overnight with her. These three and the girl were sitting in the maids' room and speaking softly.

"Who will go for the oil?" asked Dunyásha.

"I won't go for anything in the world, Avdótya Nikoláevna," replied the second girl.

"Don't say that! You will go with Aksyútka."

"I will run down by myself," said Aksyútka, immediately losing her courage.

Aksyútka with one hand raised her skirt and, not being able on that account to swing both her arms, swung her one arm twice as violently across the line of motion and darted away. She shuddered and felt that if she heard or saw anything, even if it were her own living mother, she would be undone from fear. She flew with closed eyes over the familiar path.

XIII.

"Is the lady sleeping or not?" a thick peasant voice suddenly spoke near Aksyútka. She opened her eyes, which had been closed, and saw somebody's figure which, she thought, was taller than the "wing"; she screamed, and bolted back so that her skirt had no time to fly after her. With one bound she was on the porch, with another in the maids' room, where she with a savage cry threw herself down on the bed. Dunyásha, her aunt, and the second girl almost died from fear; but before they had fully recovered, slow, heavy, indecisive steps were heard in the vestibule and at the door. Dunyásha made for the lady's room, dropping the plaster; the second girl hid herself behind some skirts hanging on the wall; the aunt, more courageous than the rest, was on the point of holding down the door, but it opened and a peasant entered the room. It was Dutlóv in his boat-like boots.

He paid no attention to the terror of the girls. He searched with his eyes for the images, and, not having discovered the small image which was hanging in the left corner, he made the sign of the cross toward a cupboard, put his cap on the window, and, sticking his hand far into his short fur coat, as though wishing to scratch himself under the arm, fetched out the letter with the five brown seals with the representations of an anchor upon them. Dunyásha's aunt clasped her breast. She barely had strength to say:

"You have frightened me, Naúmych! I can't spea-eak a word. I thought the end had come."

"How could you do it?" said the second girl, moving out from behind the skirts.

"You have disturbed the lady, too," said Dunyásha, coming in through the door. "What makes you come to the girls' porch, without asking permission? A regular lout!"

Without excusing himself, Dutlóv repeated that he wanted to see the lady.

"She is not well," said Dunyásha.

Just then Aksyútka snorted with such an indecently loud laugh that she had to hide her head in the pillows of the bed, from which she, in spite of the threats of Dunyásha and her aunt, could not take it away without blurting out again, as if something were bursting in her pink breast and red cheeks. It seemed so funny to her that all should have been frightened, — and she again hid her head and, as though in spasms, twisted her shoes and bobbed up with her whole body.

Dutlóv stopped and looked attentively at her, as though to give himself an account of what was going on in her, but, not being able to make out a thing, he turned aside and continued his speech.

"It is, as I say, a very important matter," he said. "Tell her that a peasant has found the letter with the money."

"What money?"

Before going in to report, Dunyásha read the address, and asked Dutlóv where and how he had found the money which Polikúshka was to have brought home from town. Having found out all the details and pushing the errand-girl, who did not stop snorting, into the vestibule, Dunyásha went to the lady, but, to Dutlóv's surprise, the lady did not receive him, and did not say anything sensible to Dunyásha.

"I know nothing, and do not want to know," said the lady, "what peasant and what money you are talking of. I cannot and do not want to see anybody. I want him to leave me in peace."

"What am I to do?" said Dutlóv, turning around the envelope. "It's no small amount. What does it say here?" he asked Dunyásha, who again read the address for him.

Dutlóv somehow could not believe it. He hoped that, maybe, the money did not belong to the lady, and that the address had not been properly read to him. But Dunyásha read the same. He sighed, put the envelope in the bosom of his coat, and was getting ready to leave.

"I suppose I shall have to give it to the commissary," he said.

"Wait, I will try once more," Dunyásha stopped him, having carefully watched the disappearance of the envelope in the bosom. "Let me have the letter!"

Dutlóv fetched it out again, but did not at once deposit it in Dunyásha's outstretched hand.

"Tell her that Semén Dutlóv found it on the road."

"But let me have it!"

"I thought it was just a letter, but a soldier read it and said that it had money in it."

"Let me have it!"

"I did not even dare go home on account of it—" again said Dutlóv, without parting from the precious envelope. "Tell her so."

Dunyásha took the envelope, and went with it again to the lady.

"Ah, my God, Dunyásha!" said the lady, in a reproachful voice. "Don't tell me about that money! When I think of that baby—"

"The peasant does not know to whom you command him to give it," again said Dunyásha.

The lady opened the envelope, shuddered, the moment she saw the money, and reflected for awhile.

"How terrible money is! How much evil it does!" she said.

"It is Dutlóv, madam. Do you command him to go, or shall you deign to come out to see him? Is all the money there?" asked Dunyásha.

"I do not want that money. This is terrible money. How much wrong it has done already! Tell him to keep it, if he wants to," the lady suddenly exclaimed, trying to find Dunyásha's hand. "Let him take it, and do with it what he pleases."

"It is fifteen hundred roubles," remarked Dunyásha, smiling slightly like a child.

"Let him take it all," impatiently repeated the lady. "Do you not understand me? This is unlucky money, and don't you ever speak of it to me! Let the peasant that found it take it! Go, go now!"

Dunyásha went to the maids' room.

"Is it all there?" asked Dutlóv.

"Count it up yourself," said Dunyásha, giving him the envelope. "I am commanded to give it to you."

Dutlóv put his cap under his arm, and, bending over, began to count.

"Haven't you an abacus?"

Dutlóv understood that the lady did not know enough to count it up, and had ordered him to count it.

"You can count it up at home. It is for you! Your money!" said Dunyásha, angrily. "'I do not want to see it,' she said; 'give to him who brought it!'"

Without unbending his back, Dutlóv fixed his eyes upon Dunyásha.

Dunyásha's aunt clapped her hands.

"Holy saints! What luck God has given you! Holy saints!"

The second girl could not believe it.

"Avdótya Nikoláevna, you are jesting."

"There is no jesting here. She commanded me to give it to the peasant — Take the money and go!" said Dunyásha, without concealing her anger. "It's grief to some and luck to others."

"It's no trifling matter, — fifteen hundred roubles," said the aunt.

"More," confirmed Dunyásha. "Well, I suppose you will place a ten-kopek candle before St. Nicholas," Dunyásha remarked, scornfully. "Why don't you come to your senses? It would be luck enough for a poor man! But he has plenty of his own."

Dutlóv finally comprehended that it was no joke. He collected the money which he had laid out to count and put it back into the envelope; but his hands were trembling, and he kept looking at the girls, to convince himself that it was not a joke.

"I declare, he can't come to, he is so happy," said Dunyásha, letting him see that she despised both the peasant and the money. "Let me put it up for you!"

She was on the point of taking it; but Dutlóv would not let her; he crumpled the money, pushed it in deeper, and took his cap.

"Are you happy?"

"I do not know what to say. It is just — "

He did not finish his sentence; he only waved his hand, smiled, almost burst out in tears, and went out.

The bell in the lady's room was rung.

"Well, did you give it to him?"

"I did."

"Was he happy?"

"He was just like insane."

"Ah, call him back! I want to ask him how he found it. Call him in here. I can't go out."

Dunyásha ran out and found the peasant in the vestibule. He had not yet put on his cap, but, bending over, having

taken out his pouch, he was loosening its cords, while holding the money in his teeth. It may have appeared to him that so long as the money was not in the pouch it was not his. When Dunyásha called him he became frightened.

"What is it, Avdótya — Avdótya Nikoláevna? Does she want to take it back? If you will take my part, upon my word, I will bring you some honey."

"As you have brought it to me before."

The door was again opened, and the peasant was taken before the lady. He did not feel happy. "Oh, she will take it back!" he thought for some reason, lifting his feet as though walking through high grass, and trying not to make a noise with his bast shoes, as he passed through the rooms. He did not understand a thing that was going on around him. He passed by a mirror, saw some flowers, and a peasant in bast shoes lifting his feet, and a gentleman painted with eyes, and some kind of a green vat, and something white — Behold, that something white began to speak, — it was the lady. He could not make out a thing, — he only bulged out his eyes. He did not know where he was, and everything appeared as though in a fog.

"Is it you, Dutlóv?"

"Yes, madam. Just as it was, so I left it," he said. "I am not at all glad, I swear to God! I just wore out the horse — "

"It is your luck," she said, with a contemptuous but kindly smile. "Take it!"

He only rolled his eyes.

"I am glad that you got it. May God grant you to use it for your good! Well, are you glad?"

"Of course I am! I am very glad, madam! I will pray for you all the time. I am so glad that our lady, thank God, is living. It was not my fault."

"How did you find it?"

"It means that I always could have tried for the lady in honour, and not — "

"He is all mixed up, lady," said Dunyásha.

"I had taken my nephew to have him enlisted; I was coming home, when I found it on the road. Polikúshka must have dropped it."

"Go, go, my dear! I am glad."

"I am so glad, madam!" said the peasant.

Then he said that he had not thanked her properly, and that he did not know what he ought to do. The lady and Dunyásha smiled. He again stepped as if going through the grass, and had the hardest time to keep himself from starting on a trot. It still appeared to him that they might stop him and take it away from him.

XIV.

AFTER coming out into the air, Dutlóv walked off the road to the lindens, ungirt himself in order to get more easily at his pouch, and began to put the money away. His lips trembled, stretching out more and more, although he did not speak a single word. After having put away the money and fastened his belt, he made the sign of the cross and went, like a drunken man, reeling along the road: he was so occupied with the thoughts that burst upon him. Suddenly he saw before him the form of a peasant who was coming toward him. He called out to him: it was Efím who was standing sentinel near the wing, with a club in his hand.

"Oh, Uncle Semén," Efím exclaimed, cheerfully, coming nearer, for he felt ill at ease by himself. "Well, uncle, have you taken down the recruits?"

"I have. What are you doing there?"

"I have to guard Polikúshka, who has hung himself."

"Where is he?"

"There, in the loft, they say, he is hanging," replied Efím, pointing with the club to the roof of the wing in the dark. Dutlóv looked in the direction of the arm, and, although he did not see a thing, he frowned, blinked, and shook his head.

"The commissary has come," said Efím, "so the coachman said. They will take him off at once. It is a terrible thing at night, uncle. I won't go up-stairs at night for anything in the world, if they ask me. Egór Mikháylovich may kill me, but I won't go."

"What a sin, what a sin!" repeated Dutlóv, apparently

for propriety's sake, without thinking of what he was saying, and wanting to go on; but the voice of Egór Mikháylovich stopped him.

"Oh, there, guard, come here!" shouted Egór Mikháylovich from the porch.

Efím replied to him.

"Who was that other peasant with you?"

"Dutlóv."

"You, Semén, come here!"

Upon coming nearer, Dutlóv, in the light of the lantern, recognized Egór Mikháylovich and a small man, an official in a cap with a cockade and uniformed overcoat: it was the commissary.

"The old man will go with us," said Egór Mikháylovich, when he saw him.

It gave the old man a twinge, but there was no getting out of it.

"You, Efím, young lad, run up to the loft where the man has hanged himself and fix the staircase so that his Honour can pass over it."

Efím, who had said that he would not go up to the wing for anything in the world, now ran toward it, clattering with his bast shoes as though they were logs.

The commissary struck fire and lighted his pipe. He lived within two versts, and had just been hauled up by the chief of the rural police for drunkenness, and so he now was in a fit of zeal: having arrived at ten o'clock at night, he wanted immediately to examine the dead man. Egór Mikháylovich asked Dutlóv what he was doing there. On their way up, Dutlóv told the clerk about the money which he had found and what the lady had done to him. Dutlóv said that he came to ask Egór Mikháylovich's permission. To Dutlóv's terror, the clerk demanded the envelope, and looked at it. The commissary, too, took the envelope into his hands and briefly and abruptly asked for the details.

"Well, the money is gone," thought Dutlóv, and was beginning to prove his innocence. But the commissary gave him back the money.

"What luck for this tawny-handed fellow!" he said.

"It comes pat to him," said Egór Mikháylovich, "he has just taken his nephew up to have him enlisted: now he will buy him off."

"Ah!" said the commissary, walking ahead.

"Will you buy Ilyá off?" asked Egór Mikháylovich.

"How can I? Will there be enough money for that? And, besides, it is too late."

"As you please," said the clerk. They both followed the commissary.

They went to the wing, in the vestibule of which the malodorous guards were waiting with a lantern. Dutlóv walked behind them. The guards looked guilty, which could be due only to the smell which they had raised there, for they had done no wrong. All were silent.

"Where?" asked the commissary.

"Here," Egór Mikháylovich said, in a whisper. "Efím, you are a young lad, so go ahead with the lantern!"

Efím had already fixed the upper deal and seemed to have lost all fear. Stepping over two and three steps at a time, he with cheerful face marched ahead, now and then turning back and with the lantern lighting up the way for the commissary. Egór Mikháylovich came after the commissary. Dutlóv, who had put one foot on the staircase, drew a sigh, and stopped. About two minutes passed, and their steps died down in the loft; evidently they had reached the body.

"Uncle, they are calling you," Efím called down through the hole.

Dutlóv ascended the stairs. Only the busts of the commissary and of Egór Mikháylovich could be seen back of the rafter in the light of the lamp; back of them somebody else was standing with his back to him. It was

Polikúshka. Dutlóv climbed over a beam, and, crossing himself, stopped.

"Turn him around, boys," said the commissary.

Nobody stirred.

"Efím, you are a young lad," said Egór Mikháylovich.

The young lad stepped over the beam, and, turning Polikúshka around, stood near by, looking with a most cheerful glance now at Polikúshka and now at the authorities, as one who is showing an albino or Julia Pastrana looks now at the public and now at the object of his show, ever ready to fulfil the wishes of the public.

"Turn him around once more!"

Polikúshka was swung around once more; he slightly swayed his hand and stirred up the sand with his foot.

"Take him down!"

"Do you want the rope cut, Vasíli Borísovich?" said Egór Mikháylovich. "Let us have an axe, boys!"

The guards and Dutlóv had to be commanded twice to put their hands to it; but the young lad handled Polikúshka as though he were a carcass of a sheep. Finally the rope was cut, and the body taken down and covered up. The commissary said that on the morrow the physician would come, and dismissed the people.

XV.

Dutlóv went to his house, moving his lips. At first he felt ill at ease, but in the measure as he approached the village, this feeling passed away, and the sensation of joy more and more penetrated his soul. In the village could be heard songs and drunken voices. Dutlóv never drank and now went straight home. It was late when he entered his hut. His wife was asleep. His elder son and the grandchildren were sleeping on the oven, while his second son slept in the storeroom. Ilyá's wife only was not asleep: she was sitting on a bench in a dirty, every-day shirt, and with uncovered hair, and was weeping. She did not get up to open the door for the uncle, but only wept the louder and pronounced lamentations. According to the opinion of the old woman, she lamented very well and eloquently, although on account of her youth she could not have had much experience in the matter.

The old woman got up and fixed a supper for her husband. Dutlóv sent Ilyá's wife away from the table. "Stop it, stop it!" he said. Aksínya rose, and, lying down on a bench, did not cease weeping. The old woman silently set the table for him, and then cleaned all off. Dutlóv did not say a word. After his prayer, he belched, washed his hands, and, taking the abacus down from the nail, went into the storeroom. There he said something in a whisper to the old woman; then she came out, and he began to rattle with the abacus. Finally he slammed to the lid of a coffer and climbed into the space under the

floor. He was long busy in the storeroom and under the floor.

When he came back the room was dark, the light of the torch having gone out. The old woman, who in the daytime was quiet and listless, now was rolling on the hanging-bed and snoring as loud as she could. Ilyá's tearful wife was also asleep and breathing softly. She slept on the bench, without having undressed herself, just as she was, and without having put anything under her head.

Dutlóv began to pray, then looked at Ilyá's wife, shook his head, put out the torch, belched once more, climbed on the oven, and lay down with his little grandson. In the dark he threw down the bast shoes and lay down on his back, looking at the cross-beam above the oven, which was barely visible above his head, and listening to the cockroaches that were swarming along the wall, and to the sighs, the snoring, the rubbing of one leg against another, and the sounds of the cattle in the yard.

He could not fall asleep for a long time. The moon rose; it grew lighter in the room and he could see Aksínya in the corner, and something else, which he could not make out. He did not know whether it was a camel-hair coat which his son had forgotten, or whether it was a vat which the women had placed there, or a man standing there. He probably dozed off, but he began to gaze at it again.

Apparently the gloomy spirit, who had led Polikúshka to commit that terrible deed and whose presence all the manorial servants felt on that night, had evidently reached with his pinion down to the village, to Dutlóv's hut, where lay the money which *he* had used for Polikúshka's ruin. At least Dutlóv felt his presence, and it unnerved him: he could neither sleep nor get up. Seeing something which he could not make out, he recalled Ilyá with his tied arms, and Aksínya with her eloquent lamenta-

tion, and Polikúshka with the swinging arm-wrists. Suddenly it appeared to the old man that somebody had passed by the window.

"What is that? Is the elder coming to see me?" he thought. "What does he want now?" thought the old man, hearing steps in the vestibule. "Did the old woman not latch the door as she went out to the vestibule?"

The dog barked in the back yard, and *he* kept walking through the vestibule, as the old man later told, as though *he* were looking for a door; then *he* passed on, began to grope along the wall, stumbled against a vat, which made a hollow noise. Again *he* began to grope, as though looking for the latch. Now *he* held it. A shiver ran up the old man's body. Now *he* pressed the latch and came in, in human form. Dutlóv knew that it was *he*. He wanted to make the sign of the cross, but could not. *He* went up to the table, upon which lay the table-cloth, pulled it off, threw it on the floor, and climbed on the oven. The old man saw at once that *he* had assumed Polikúshka's form. *He* grinned, and *his* hands dangled. *He* climbed up on the oven and threw himself straight on the old man and began to choke him.

"It is my money," said Polikúshka.

"Let me go, I will not do it," Semén wanted to say, but could not.

Polikúshka choked him with all the weight of a stone mountain pressing on his chest. Dutlóv knew that if he said a prayer, *he* would let him go, and he knew what kind of a prayer it was, but he could not pronounce it.

His grandchild was sleeping near him. The boy gave a piercing shriek and began to cry: his grandfather had jammed him against the wall. The boy's cry released the old man's lips.

"Let God rise," said Dutlóv. *He* released him a little. "And his enemies will be dispersed," lisped Dutlóv.

He went down from the oven. Dutlóv heard him

strike the floor with both his feet. Dutlóv kept saying prayers which he knew, saying them one after the other. *He* went to the door, past the table, and so slammed it that the whole house shook. But all were asleep, except the old man and his grandson. The old man kept saying his prayers and trembling with his whole body; the grandson wept, falling asleep, and pressed close to his grandfather.

Everything was quiet again. The old man lay motionless. A cock crowed behind the wall, right under Dutlóv's ear. He heard the hens stirring and the young cock trying to crow after the old one, but making a failure of it. Something moved over the old man's legs: it was the cat. It jumped down with its soft feet on the floor and began to mew near the door.

The old man got up. He raised a window; outside it was dark and muddy; a wagon limber was standing under the window. He went barefoot, making the sign of the cross, out into the yard to the horses. It was at once apparent that the master had come. The mare which was standing under the penthouse near a buttress had become entangled in her halter, had spilled some chaff, and, raising her leg and turning her head back, was waiting for her master. The colt had rolled himself on the manure heap. The old man raised him on his feet, disentangled the mare, added some feed, and went back to the house.

The old woman got up and lighted a torch.

"Wake the boys, I will go to town," and, lighting a wax taper from the images, he crawled with it into the space below the floor. Not only at Dutlóv's house, but in the houses of all the neighbours, the fires were made, when he came out from it. The boys were up and dressing themselves. The women went in and out with buckets and pails of milk. Ignát was hitching up the cart. His second son was greasing another. The young

woman no longer wept, but, having dressed herself and put on her kerchief, was sitting on a bench in the room, waiting for the time when she would go to town to bid her husband farewell.

The old man seemed to be unusually stern. He did not say a word to any one, put on his new caftan, girded himself, and with all of Polikúshka's money went to Egór Mikháylovich.

"Don't lose time!" he shouted to Ignát, who was turning a wheel on a raised and greased axle. "I will be back at once, so let everything be ready!"

The clerk had just got up and was drinking tea. He himself was getting ready to go to town to present the recruits.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Egór Mikháylovich, I want to buy off the lad. Do me the favour! You told me the other day that you knew a volunteer in town. Instruct me what to do, for we are ignorant."

"Well, have you thought the matter over?"

"I have, Egór Mikháylovich: I am sorry for him, he is my brother's son. Whatever he may be, I pity him. This money is the cause of too much sinning. Do me the favour, instruct me!" he said, bowing as far as his waist.

Egór Mikháylovich, as always in such cases, for a long time thoughtfully and silently smacked his lips, and, having considered the matter, wrote two notes and told him how and what to do in town.

When Dutlóv came home, the young woman had already left with Ignát, and the dappled, pot-bellied mare, all hitched up, was standing at the gate. He broke a stick out from the wattled fence, wrapped himself in his coat, seated himself in the cart box, and started his horse. Dutlóv drove his mare so fast that she at once lost all her belly, and Dutlóv no longer looked at her, so

as not to be touched to sympathy. He was vexed by the thought that he would somehow be too late at the conscription, that Ilyá would be enlisted, and that the devil's money would be left on his hands.

I shall not describe in detail all the adventures of Dutlóv on that morning; I will only say that he had unusual bad luck. The master, to whom Egór Mikháylovich had given him a note, had a volunteer all ready, who was indebted to him to the amount of twenty-three roubles and who had been approved of by the military board. The master wanted four hundred for him, and a burgher, who had been trying to get him for the last three weeks, had offered three hundred for him. Dutlóv finished the matter in a very few words.

"Will you take three twenty-five?" he said, stretching out his hand, but with such an expression that it was evident that he was ready to add more immediately.

The master pulled his hand away and continued to ask four hundred.

"Won't you take three and a quarter?" repeated Dutlóv, seizing the master's right hand with his left and threatening to come down on it with his right. "Won't you take it? God be with you!" he suddenly exclaimed, striking the master's hand and swinging his body away from him. "I suppose it has to be! Take three and a half! Get the receipt ready. Bring here the lad! And here is the earnest. Two red bills, will that do?"

Dutlóv ungirt himself and drew out the money.

The master did not draw his hand back, but pretended not to be satisfied yet. He did not accept the earnest, and wanted him to stand treat for the company and the volunteer.

"Don't sin," repeated Dutlóv, pushing the money into his hand; "we shall all die," he repeated, in such a meek, persuasive, and confident tone that the master said:

"Let it be!" and again clapped Dutlóv's hand and began to pray. "God grant you luck!" he said.

The volunteer was wakened. He had been sleeping off a spree from the day before. They examined him and went with him to the office of the military board. The volunteer was merry, asked for rum, for which Dutlóv gave him some money, and lost his courage only as they entered the vestibule of the government building.

For a long time there stood in the vestibule the old master in a blue cloak and the volunteer in a short fur coat, with raised eyebrows and bulging eyes. For a long time they kept whispering, trying to get somewhere, wishing to see somebody, for some unknown reason doffing their caps in front of every scribe, and in deep meditation listening to the decision which a scribe, whom the master knew, brought out to them. All hope to get the matter settled on that day was abandoned, and the volunteer was again growing merry and talkative, when Dutlóv suddenly espied Egór Mikháylovich, to whom he at once clung, begging him with low obeisances to help him.

Egór Mikháylovich aided him so well that at about three o'clock the volunteer, to his great disgust and surprise, was taken into the enlistment-room, where under universal merriment, which for some reason was shared by all, from the guards to the president, he was undressed, shaved, dressed again, and let out through a door. Five minutes later Dutlóv counted out the money, received a receipt, and, bidding the merchant and volunteer good-bye, went to his lodging to the merchant's, where the Pokróvskoe recruits were.

Ilyá and his young wife were sitting in a corner of the merchant's kitchen; the moment the old man entered, they stopped talking and fixed their submissive, hostile glance upon him. As usual, the old man said his prayer, ungirt himself, fetched out the document, and called into

the room his eldest son Ignát and Ilyá's mother, who were in the yard.

"Don't sin, Ilyá!" he said, walking over to his nephew. "You told me a terrible word last night. Don't you know I pity you? If it had been in my power I should not have given you up. Now God has given me luck, and so I have not spared the money. Here is the document," he said, placing the receipt on the table and cautiously opening it with his crooked, unbending fingers.

Into the room came all the Pokróvskoe peasants, the merchant's workmen, and even strangers. All had guessed what was up, but no one interrupted the old man's solemn speech.

"Here is the document! I paid four hundred roubles for it. Don't blame your uncle."

Ilyá rose, but was silent, not knowing what to say. His lips quivered from agitation; his old mother went up to him, sobbing, and wanted to fall around his neck; but the old man slowly and commandingly pushed her hand aside and continued speaking.

"You told last night a word," the old man repeated once more, "and with that word you have, so to speak, stuck a knife into my heart. Your father, dying, entrusted you to me, and you had been like my own son to me, and if I have in any way offended you, we are all living in sin. Is it not so, Orthodox people?" he turned to the peasants who were standing around him. "Here is also your own mother, and your young wife: here is the receipt. God take the money! Forgive me, for Christ's sake!"

Turning back the flap of his camel-hair coat, he slowly knelt down and bowed down to the ground before Ilyá and his wife. The young people tried in vain to keep him back: he did not get up until his head had touched the floor, after which he adjusted his clothes and sat down on a bench. Ilyá's mother and wife wept with joy; in the crowd were heard words of approval. "This is just

and godly," said one. "What is money? You can't buy a lad for money," said another. "What a joy!" said a third, "in short, he is a just man." Only the peasants who were to be enlisted as recruits said nothing and silently went out into the yard.

Two hours later the carts of the Dutlóvs left the suburb of the town. In the first of these, drawn by the dappled mare with the big belly and sweaty neck, sat the old man and Ignát. In the back of the cart shook bundles of water-chestnuts and white-bread. In the second cart, which was not guided by any one, sat the staid and happy young woman and her mother-in-law, their heads covered with kerchiefs. The young woman kept a wine-bottle under cover. Ilyá, curling up, with his back to the horse and with a red face, was being jolted in the front of the cart, eating white-bread and never ceasing to talk. The voices and the rumble of the wheels on the pavement, and the snorting of the horses, — everything mingled in one merry sound. The horses, swaying their tails, increased their pace as they felt the nearness to home. Passers-by and people in vehicles looked back at the happy family.

Just as they left the town, the Dutlóvs overtook a party of recruits. A group of recruits stood around a dram-shop. One of them, with that unnatural expression which a shaven head gives a person, having his gray cap poised on the back of his head, was strumming a balaláyka; another, without a cap, with a brandy-bottle in one hand, was dancing in the middle of the circle.

Ignát got out of the cart to shorten the traces. All the Dutlóvs watched the dancer, with curiosity, approval, and merriment. The recruit did not seem to see any one, but he felt that the admiring public was growing larger, and that increased his strength and agility. He danced briskly. He was frowning, his ruddy face was motionless, and his mouth had stopped on a smile which had long

ago lost its expression. It seemed as though all the powers of his soul were directed toward the one object of placing his feet as fast as possible now on the heels and now on the toes.

Now and then he stopped and winked to the balaláyka player, who began more briskly to strum all the strings and even to strike the wood with his knuckles. The recruit stopped, but even in this motionless position he seemed to be dancing. Suddenly he began to move slowly, jerking his shoulders; then he suddenly darted upward, squatted down while in full motion, and with a wild scream began to dance the national jig.

The boys laughed; the women shook their heads; the men smiled approvingly. An old under-officer stood calmly near the dancer, with an expression which said: "This is new to you, but quite old to us." The balaláyka player was apparently tired; he looked lazily around, as he struck a false chord, and suddenly knocked his fingers on the wood of the instrument, and the dance was over.

"Oh, Alékha," said the musician, pointing to Dutlóv. "There is your godfather!"

"Where? My dear friend!" shouted Alékha, that same recruit whom Dutlóv had bought, and, tripping forward with tired feet and holding the brandy-bottle over his head, he moved up to the cart. "Míshka, a glass!" he shouted. "Master! My dear friend! What a pleasure this is, indeed!" he exclaimed, sticking his drunken head into the cart and treating the men and the women to brandy. The men drank it, but the women declined it. "My dear ones, what can I offer you?" cried Alékha, embracing the women.

A pastry woman was standing in the crowd. Alékha saw her; he grabbed her tray and poured the contents of it into the cart.

"Don't be afraid, I will pay you, — the devil," he screeched in a tearful voice, and immediately pulled out

of his pocket a tobacco-pouch with money, which he threw to Míshka.

He stood leaning against the cart, and looked with moist eyes upon those who were sitting in it.

"Which one is the mother?" he asked. "Is it you? I must treat her, too."

He stood thinking for a moment, then he fumbled in his pocket, fetched from it a new, folded kerchief, untied the sash with which he was girded under his overcoat, quickly took the red kerchief down from his neck, crumpled the whole lot, and stuck them into the old woman's lap.

"Here it is, a gift from me," he said, in a voice which grew ever more quiet.

"What for? Thank you, my dear! What a simple lad," said the old woman, turning to old Dutlóv, who had come up to their cart.

Alékha grew completely quiet, and, looking dull, as though falling asleep, dropped his head lower and lower.

"I am going for you, and am perishing for you!" he said. "And so I make you gifts."

"I suppose you have a mother of your own," said one in the crowd. "What a simple lad; what a pity!"

Alékha raised his head.

"I have a mother," he said. "I have a father too. They have disowned me. Listen, old woman!" he added, taking the hand of Ilyá's mother. "I have given you presents. Listen to me, for Christ's sake! Go to the village of Vódnoe! Ask there for old woman Nikónovna; she is my mother, you hear? — and tell her, that old woman, old Nikónova, the third hut from the end, a new well — tell her that Alékha, her son — you know — Musician, let her go!" he shouted.

And he began to dance once more, speaking all the time, and smashing the bottle with what brandy there was left in it against the floor.

Ignát climbed into the cart and wanted to drive on.

"Good-bye, God grant you luck!" said the old woman, wrapping herself in her fur coat.

Alékha suddenly stopped.

"Go to the devil!" he shouted, threatening them with clenched fists. "May your mother!—"

"O Lord!" exclaimed Ilyá's mother, making the sign of the cross.

Ignát pulled the mare's reins, and the cart again rumbled along. Alékha, the recruit, stood in the middle of the road and, clenching his fists, with an expression of rage in his face, cursed the peasants as much as he could.

"What are you stopping for? Go on! Devils, blood-suckers!" he cried. "You won't get away from me! Devils! Bast shoe churls!—"

With this word his voice faltered, and just as he stood, so he fell in a heap on the ground.

The Dutlóvs soon rode out into the open country and, upon looking back, no longer saw the recruits. After having driven about five versts at a slow pace, Ignát got down from his father's cart, in which the old man had fallen asleep, and walked by the side of Ilyá's cart.

The two emptied the brandy-bottle which they had brought with them from town. A little later, Ilyá started a song and the women seconded him. Ignát shouted merrily, keeping time with the song. A merry post tróyka came rapidly toward them. The driver shouted briskly to his horses, as he came abreast with the two merry carts; the postilion looked back and winked to the red faces of the peasants and women, who were being jolted in the cart, singing a merry song.

11766